THE TRAIL OF GLORY

BY LEROY SCOTT

O. P. Sent to R. R. L. 9/20/32

REFERENCE LIBRARY OF

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

2 PARK STREET, BOSTON

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES

EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF

THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.

Archive Collection

This book may not leave the Offices and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days

Books by Leroy Scott

THE TRAIL OF GLORY
THE HEART OF KATIE O'DOONE
CHILDREN OF THE WHIRLWIND
A DAUGHTER OF TWO WORLDS
MARY REGAN
NO. 13 WASHINGTON SQUARE
CORDELIA THE MAGNIFICENT
PARTNERS OF THE NIGHT
COUNSEL FOR THE DEFENSE
TO HIM THAT HATH
THE SHEARS OF DESTINY
THE WALKING DELEGATE

THE TRAIL OF GLORY

THE TRAIL OF GLORY

BY

LEROY SCOTT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

WILLIAM T. TILDEN, 2d

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1926

COPYRIGHT, 1923 AND 1926, BY LEROY SCOTT

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

The Riverside Press
CAMBRIDGE · MASSACHUSETTS
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

TO

CHARLES JACOB SEMBOWER

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA

MY FIRST COACH

IN THE UNMASTERABLE GAME OF WRITING

CONTENTS

I. The Trail's Beginning 1

II. Opportunity Comes to Jerry 18

III. Jerry and Tommie 27

IV. Where the Trail Led 39

V. The First Key is Tried 62

VI. The Second Key 78

VII. How the Key Worked 95

VIII. Concerning Best-Laid Plans 114

IX. Another Flaw 133

X. Jerry Goes forth to Battle 142

XI. His Back to the Wall 161

XII. His Jerry Game 176

XIII. The Trail's End 192

XIV. Afterwards 200

INTRODUCTION

AMATEUR sport is to-day on trial. Public confidence is shaken in the spirit that governs our games. The bugaboo of professionalism and specter of commercialism stalk from the preparatory school, through college, on into the Amateur Athletic Union, the United States Lawn Tennis Association, and the United States Golf Association.

The reason for the existence of these widely discussed and widely dreaded ghosts is made fully clear in 'The Trail of Glory,' the greatest sport novel I have ever read. Leroy Scott traces the ghost germ to its beginning, then follows its development in the individual, and then he shows the effect upon the individual of the modern sports system with its over-development and its over-emphasis on victory.

We may cripple lives, retard or divert careers, but we must have victory: that is more and more becoming the tendency, if

not the formulated creed, of our modern sports.

Where leads this trail of glory?

In this stirring story of tennis — only its trimmings are tennis, its real substance and significance belong to all sports — Mr. Scott asks, through the medium of the sport career of his hero, this most vital of present-day sport questions — a question that each individual athlete of national fame must answer satisfactorily to himself if he would avoid a future of regrets. In submitting this great question to his audience Mr. Scott does not accuse, does not preach, does not take sides. He just tells a story. It is a story full of the drama of life, the color and romance and humor of the field of sports, the good-fellowship and free sportsmanship of the tennis world — and of understanding and sympathy and generous kindliness. Perhaps next to its truth and its drama one must rank its understanding kindliness. There is no villain, every character is likable; all that is done, even that which threat-

ens evil, springs from unselfish motives. Within the pages of this book Mr. Scott has caught the very essence of all those fine, high things of sport which are menaced by that underlying situation which is driving onward toward the commercialization of amateur athletes.

Mr. Scott knows sport and sportsmen. He is of the first and is the second. You know as you read that he also is thrilled by the flying balls and singing racquets of his scenes — and yet, though himself fascinated by the spell of it all, he never for a moment loses the fundamental drama of the conflict between the player and his future, which may be raging in the player's consciousness even during a spectacular and applauded match.

Junior tennis — that is, tennis among boys and girls of less than eighteen years — is to-day more highly developed and organized in America than anywhere else in the world. These junior players, who are the champions of to-morrow, must individually face

and solve, or fail to solve, the problems out of which grows the drama of 'The Trail of Glory' — and how infinitely better if these problems be clarified and solved while the player is still a youth! This book will point the way through these problems for young players, and in doing so will give them an uplifting sense of the higher values that exist in tennis — its idealism, its generosity, its fine comradeship, its spirit of utter fairness. I can recommend this book to every boy and girl, not only because of the clear light it throws upon a puzzling cross-road in life, but because, considered just as a story, it is a thrilling, gripping tale of gallant sport such as every boy and girl cannot but love.

If in this introduction I do not attempt a full discussion of the fundamental situation on which Mr. Scott's story is based, my reason is that much that I might say is better said in the story's fourth chapter by Mr. Scott's characters. Elaboration here by me would be merely repetition. I commend the most thoughtful reading and rereading of

that chapter to all ambitious sportsmen, to all heads of educational institutions where supremacy in sports is fostered, to all parents with children whose dreams run forward to supreme glory in sports. And after the last rereading I suggest that the reader look for an hour squarely into the face of this basic question: 'Where leads this trail of glory?'

This book, with its truth, its fairness, its simplicity, its clear vision of the trail's end, is worthy of being taken up and spread broadcast, as a statement of their principles in terms of dramatic humanity, by all those who are concerned in trying to turn sports in the direction of a saner ideal. Certainly the book should do much to clear away the mystery connected with amateur sportsmen being accused of commercialization. It should also do much to open the eyes of the public to the very acute personal problems which confront the champions and players of championship possibilities in all lines of popular amateur sport.

I am proud of this chance to express my appreciation of what Mr. Scott has here done for the champions in making public their problems, and I am proud to have my few words stand as an introduction to the greatest of all sport stories.

WILLIAM T. TILDEN, 2ND

THE TRAIL OF GLORY

THE TRAIL OF GLORY

CHAPTER I

THE TRAIL'S BEGINNING

It was a great discovery! — so it seemed to Jerry as Newport confirmed and emphasized the truth to him. A thrilling discovery!

His discovery concerned tennis. Not the ordinary, easy tennis as it is enjoyably played by its hundreds of thousands of devotees; but the intensified and glorified modern tennis as it is played by the champions, the near-champions, the not-quite-so-near champions, who make the rounds of the famous tournaments and electrify the galleries by the miracles of their racquets. That discovery had been coming upon Jerry bit by bit all during this, his first season of big tournament play: at the tournaments at Seabright, Southampton, Longwood, where he and the other players had been welcomed

into the great summer homes of the fashionable and the rich. But it was Newport — richest and most fashionable of them all — Newport and the National Tournament that put the seal of final and definite truth upon his great discovery.

This great discovery — Jerry was later to make a second great discovery — was as follows: Tennis is a game of amateurs, and amateurs only; and the tennis of the great tournaments is the tennis of the greatest amateurs. Tennis is also a game of 'gentlemen,' not applying that word in its misabused and snobbish sense. If one had a game of big-tournament caliber, and did not have impossible manners, why these rich people, these powerful people, these prominent people, took you to them as one of themselves. A crack tennis game was an open sesame to the best society. Why, the way these fine people were good to him, Jerry MacAllister, an embarrassed, blushing nobody!

And a crack tennis game was not only a

great social asset. It was also a great business asset. It created for one the opportunity of meeting men of great affairs during their hours of relaxation, when they were inclined to be enthusiastic over you and put good things in your way if they could. He knew of several young fellows among the star players who had already made great use, or were on the way to making great use, of the social and business opportunities their tennis skill had brought them.

Yes, this was a wonderful discovery that Jerry had made!

Jerry's stimulated imagination said this same thing to him in more colorful picture phrases. In other days gallant knights had blazed along the trail of glory with flashing swords. In this present day unarmored knights won their blazing way along that trail with flashing racquets. To Jerry it remained the same trail of glory.

Being a normal boy with normal ambition, Jerry yearned for the opportunities which a flashing racquet would bring to him for mix-

ing with these fine people. But boy though he was, Jerry was a clear thinker and a straight thinker; and even in the very hours that Newport gave him her conclusive evidence proving the truth of his great discovery, in the very thrill of these Newport days, Jerry recognized that his discovery could never be of use to him, that these wonderful opportunities could never be his, that the trail of glory was not for him.

The recognition of this fact hurt him — hurt him terribly. But Jerry came of sound stock that knew how to fight, to take hard blows, even defeat, and keep right on going. So Jerry accepted the inevitable with as much philosophy as sixteen and a half can accept a golden dream that never is to come true, and went right ahead, smiling his usual smile.

One opportunity, one glory, however, was not to be denied him. Jerry had won his way through the early rounds at Newport, and one morning toward the middle of tournament week he took his place on the opposite

side of a tennis net from Arthur Donaldson. That was the highest moment of Jerry's tennis life. To play against the wonderful and beloved Donaldson — his own supreme idol — and in a National Championship match!

For three years that had been a remote and absurd and impossible yet enthralling dream, of the sort which boyish minds will cherish despite admitted impossibilities. These last few weeks, however, since he had been playing in the big tournaments, the boyish dream had begun to seem a possible possibility. But the luck of the draw had been against him; he and Donaldson had always been in opposite halves of the draw, and of course Jerry had not reached the finals.

But at last he was facing the world-famous champion!

The match had been assigned to one of the side courts, and had been scheduled for an early hour, for the contest between the champion and this young colt had not been

considered an important one. The grandstand court had been reserved for what was judged would prove to be the star match of the day, to begin an hour and a half later, between the two men who, when the ranking list for that season was later issued, were placed at No. 2 and No. 3. So Jerry and the champion had only a small gallery of Newport's early risers.

But though Jerry's every cell was exultant, athrill, at the unbelievable honor of meeting the champion, the tennis-playing part of him was not flurried in the least. That was one quality which Jerry had got from his sound forbears: the ability to do his very best, even when his very best might not be quite good enough, under the most disturbing circumstances.

Donaldson started off with that comparatively easy (for him) quality of tennis with which he was accustomed to win his preliminary matches. But the boy got everything — almost — and sent it back, to the last square foot of the far corners, or

flashing down just within the sidelines, or sharply angled 'cross court, or floating to fall dead just over the net. Before the scanty gallery was fully awake to what was happening, the first set stood five all.

And then suddenly that apparently easy game of Donaldson, which was altogether too hard for most of the players here at Newport, dropped from him as he might have dropped a graceful but encumbering cloak, and he became the fiery, flashy Comet of world fame. Over the net came that terrific cannon-ball first service: with its force so great that, on a more famous occasion, it again and again tore the racquet from the hand of Winters, the great Australian. And over came the terrific American service, with its high-bounding break to Jerry's backhand. And over came terrific smashes of Jerry's lobs, and terrific forehand drives, and tigerish volleying, the ball sharply angled or coming with rifle speed at Jerry's shoe-laces.

Over came all of Donaldson's best. And

to all of Donaldson's best — cannon-ball service, American service, drives, tremendous smashes of lobs, lightning-like volleys — the boy stood up as cool as a veteran star. Almost everything he got his racquet on came right back, and much of Donaldson's best came back with such speed and such clever placement that even the marvel of anticipation and agility that Donaldson was could not reach the shots.

Of course the great champion won, and won in three straight sets. The player did not breathe who could have beaten the Donaldson of that year. But the match had been no one-sided battle.

The small gallery applauded and then hurried away to get seats for the star match. As the winning shot flashed down his sideline, Jerry, making no effort to recover the ungettable ball and not even glancing at it, sprang over the net with hand outstretched for the customary congratulations the vanquished extends the victor. His sweaty face was flushed, not so much from his recent

exertions as from pride and happiness. His words were the first he had ever spoken face to face with the champion.

'I'm ever so much obliged to you, Mr. Donaldson,' he stammered, showing his first confusion on the court. 'It was wonderful luck, having a chance to play against you! And I was wonderfully lucky to do as well as I did!'

Donaldson's freckled face broke into its friendly grin. He was just a bit embarrassed by this enthusiasm. Famous as he was, he was himself then just a big boy of perhaps twenty-four or five.

'Wait a minute, son. Where did you get that *mister* stuff? Arthur's my name. Or Donnie, if you like that better. I like it better myself. It's what most people call me.'

'My name's MacAllister,' said the proud boy, 'and if you'd call me Jerry, I'd — I'd —'

'All right, Jerry,' said Donnie. 'That's a nice game you played. A mighty nice game.'

'Oh, I was just lucky, Mr. — I mean Donnie. I got most of the breaks. I'll never forget this match.' Then Jerry repeated one of his first sentences. 'It was simply wonderful luck, my having a chance to play against you!'

For a moment Donaldson's candid, puckering eyes peered thoughtfully into the face of the boy. He saw a face as open, as forthright as his own. In it was determination and youth's high confidence, but no smallest bit of that dangerous conceit which goes swiftly to the head and unbalances that member — a condition of self-glorification from which Donaldson never suffered in his day, nor Jerry after him.

The brief appraisal over, Donaldson slipped an easy arm around the boy's shoulders.

'Let's sit down.' They took seats on two vacated linesmen's chairs. 'How old are you, Jerry?'

'Seventeen.' And then Jerry corrected himself: 'Sixteen and a half.'

'When I was about your age —' Donaldson broke off; then the easy, friendly voice went on: 'A minute ago you said you were lucky to-day. Sometime, perhaps three or four years from now, you and I will be playing again, Jerry, and when that match comes, you'll be a lot luckier than you were this time. Only in that match it'll not be luck.'

Jerry blinked. 'I don't think I — I just get you, Donnie.'

Donaldson again flashed on Jerry his magnetic grin — only this time the smile was rather grave.

'Then I'll try to make myself plain. When we play that match, you'll lick the tar out of me. You'll blow me off the court.'

Jerry could only gape and stare. These utterly impossible words simply could not register upon his brain.

'Perhaps I could have won those last two sets from you without playing as hard as I did,' Donaldson went on. 'But I wasn't just trying to beat you up. I saw you were good,

and I thought I'd give you my best to make you show your best — to find out just how much you have. You've got an awful lot, Jerry. You've got more than I have.'

'Why — why —' gasped Jerry, and could get out no more.

'I don't mean that what you've got is developed yet. I mean that it's all there, and can be developed, and you seem to be developing it in the right way. Fundamentally you've got a better game than I have.'

To Jerry this was amazing heresy. And with Donaldson himself the heretic! Donaldson of all men!

'I don't believe it!' exclaimed Jerry. 'Nobody could be better than you!'

But notwithstanding such a positive and thoroughly believed declaration, the curious boy could not withhold an amazed question:

'How — how do you think my game is better?'

'Well — your ground strokes, for instance. Particularly your backhand. That's the big hole in my tennis. You'll have a

great service when you get a bit older and get better control and more experience. The same with all your other strokes. And you've got grand foot-work. I think that's almost your best point, your foot-work. Where did you pick up such a game?'

'I always loved to play. And then these last four years, since I've been in high school, my English teacher has been coaching me. He never got tired showing me things — seemed he couldn't do too much for me.' Jerry's voice had grown eager. 'He's Alexander Cunningham — "Old Cunny" they used to call him. You've heard of him?'

'Old Cunny! That explains your game. Or part of it.'

'You knew Old Cunny?' Jerry asked eagerly.

Donaldson shook his head. 'Not personally. Old Cunny quit tournament play before I began. They tell me he knew more of the technique and strategy of tennis than any American player that ever lived. A

brain-player who didn't have the natural gift for executing the perfection he knew; that's why he never got to the top. You certainly could not have had a better teacher, Jerry!'

'I certainly couldn't!' Jerry agreed. 'If I can play tennis, it's all because of Old Cunny!'

Donaldson did not speak at once. For the moment he was thinking of this latest repetition of that old story of tennis: that old story of all true sports, that old story of all the great arts: a marvelous technical expert, lacking the gifts of execution and therefore unable to reach the heights of fame — and finding a rare pupil with the gifts denied himself, devotedly drilling that pupil in all he knows, and vicariously winning glory through his pupil's success and fame.

What an old, old story it was! They were real champions, even if nameless, such men as these!

Donaldson went back to his former subject, again smiling.

'Yes, Jerry, some day you'll be blowing me off the court. They'll be calling you champion. Very likely champion of the world. All you've got to do is just keep on going.'

This utter simplicity, this easy outspoken candor of his idol, stirred to speech their kind in Jerry.

'Even if it was in me ever to be as good as you say, Donnie, I'll never beat you — I'll never be champion.'

'No? Why not?'

'This match — the one we've just finished — is the last match I'll ever play. In a big tournament, I mean.'

Donaldson stared at him.

'Hello! Sixteen and a half — and a comer — and already quitting the game! What's the answer? Don't you like tennis?'

'I love tennis! But I'm poor. I've got to go to work. And right away.'

'Oh!' Donaldson's exclamation was packed with understanding. For Donaldson knew what pangs there were in the situation

of loving championship tennis and of being poor.

Jerry explained a little further.

'My father and mother intended me to go to college, and I wanted to go. But my father died two years ago, and my mother died a few months later, and there was just enough left to see me through high school. I graduated this last June, and expected to go to work then. But Mr. Cunningham, after the way he'd trained me, wanted me to have at least one try among the big players, so he had our club back home put up the money — he really raised most of it himself — to send me East for the tournaments. I wanted Old Cunny to come, too. It made me feel awfully selfish — but — but —'

'Let's have the rest,' prompted Donaldson.

'There was only enough money raised for one of us to come, and Old Cunny didn't have any money of his own. You see he just about breaks even. He's only got his teacher's salary, and that's not very big,

and then he's married and has three small children. So he made me come alone. And there's still another reason I'm lucky in being polished off by you to-day,' Jerry ended with that frank smile of his which was later to be as famous as Donaldson's then was. 'The trip's cost a little more than we figured on. I've got barely enough left to get me home, so to-day'll be the end of big tennis for me and I'll be starting back to-night.'

Donaldson slowly nodded. 'A comer — and already gone!' he murmured to himself.

He regarded Jerry thoughtfully for a long moment. 'Well,' he said. 'Well . . .' And then: 'Suppose we change our clothes and then see that feature match together. It ought to be a corker.'

CHAPTER II

OPPORTUNITY COMES TO JERRY

SIDE by side they crossed the grounds, Donaldson chatting easily, a comradely hand upon Jerry's shoulder. No eager, would-be king in the hour of his coronation ever so thrilled at the first touch of the crown as Jerry thrilled while he walked across the Casino lawn with his idol's hand thus publicly upon him.

During his shower, and while he was dressing, Jerry continued to be athrill, dazed, with what the great champion had said. The champion had said that he in his turn would be champion. He, Jerry MacAllister, champion! And even champion of the world! Donnie had said so!

It was a wonderful thing to have said of one, even if it was never going to come true. It was almost as good as actually being champion. He'd tell Old Cunny what

Donnie had said, when he got home. That would help cheer Old Cunny up, for dear Old Cunny had himself been bitterly grieved at the unfortunate turn of events which was to end the tennis career of his one promising and carefully trained pupil before its real beginning.

These dazzling thoughts slowed down Jerry's dressing. When he at length stepped out, he found Donaldson waiting, and it was at once evident that he had been waiting several minutes.

'Want you to meet some people, Jerry,' he said, taking Jerry's arm and leading him to the broad porch of the Casino.

As Jerry saw toward whom they were headed, he experienced an entirely new set of awed thrills. He hardly heard Donnie's introduction; he didn't need to hear it. Every one in tennis knew Mr. Graham. He was ruddy of face, and inclined to that portliness which overtakes many athletes in their forties. But back in the late nineties William Graham — 'Billy' they had called

him then — had been national champion for a year, and thereafter for a dozen years he had continued to play, with dimming luster as a performer, in all the important tournaments. More important just now than this ancient court record — in Jerry's eyes at least — was the fact that Mr. Graham was at present one of the country's most important figures in the management of tennis affairs: national committeeman — Davis Cup committeeman — everything.

At Mr. Graham's side was a girl of perhaps fourteen. Jerry had seen her at the tournaments, practicing with various cracks early in the morning, when the courts were not in use, or after the day's matches were ended. Jerry thought she played a corking game; that is, for a girl.

The introductions over, Donaldson said he'd wait for Jerry and drifted away to chat with friends.

'See here, MacAllister, what about this yarn Donnie has just been telling me about your quitting tennis?' demanded Mr. Gra-

ham. He had a booming, autocratic, growling voice, but the growl in it was a pleasant hearty growl.

Jerry repeated the facts he had just recited to Donaldson: his desires, his resigned ambitions, his grim necessities.

'You're going to quit tennis to go to work!' the great man exploded. 'Like hell you are! Why, dammit — 'Lizabeth, you stop listening when your old man loses control of his temper and his language. In a case like this I've got a right to lose control of everything! — Dammit, MacAllister, you're not going to do any such damned thing! You're going to do just what I tell you!'

Jerry was taken aback by the blustering vehemence of this outburst. But the girl, who had nice, direct, blue eyes, informed Jerry by her smile not to be disturbed by her father's manner.

'Why, sir — I don't know, sir,' stammered Jerry. 'If you'd tell me what you wanted, sir —'

'You just listen to me, MacAllister,' Graham interrupted. 'How's America going to take the lead in tennis — how's she going to win the Davis Cup, and hold it, and win it back when she loses it — if America doesn't keep her eyes open for promising young players, and develop a promising young player when she spots one? America's got to do that very thing! I've been watching you these last few weeks, and I've thought you looked mighty good; though I didn't think you had as much in you as Donnie just told me you've got. Now you'd like to go on playing tennis, wouldn't you?'

'Of course I would! But —'

'Leave out the "buts"! And you said you wanted to go to college, didn't you?'

'Yes. But —'

'Dammit — I said leave out the "buts"! Listen, MacAllister. Here's what you're going to do. You're going to college. And you're going to develop the best tennis that's in you. Money's the only thing between you and those things. Well — I put up the money.'

Jerry stared, not as yet taking this in. At that time he did not know that the great amateur sports of to-day have their splendid patrons, as painting and sculpture and music and literature had their splendid patrons in earlier centuries. Mr. Graham had inherited wealth; amateur sports, many kinds, had comprised his life's chief activities; and of these tennis was nearest and dearest to him. He was a Lorenzo the Magnificent of tennis.

As Jerry got the full meaning of this proposition, he involuntarily drew himself up and stiffened.

'I thank you very much, sir. You are most generous and kind. But I could not accept — accept charity.'

'Charity — hell, what's in the boy!' exploded the ruddy man. 'Wouldn't I be getting my money's worth? I ask you that? Wouldn't I be getting my money back in honest satisfaction? Of course I would! Then how the devil do you figure I'd be handing out charity?'

'I can't say, sir. But I'd be receiving charity.'

'Oh, hell! What are you, MacAllister — a damned fool?'

Jerry did not answer; rather tall, he stood quietly erect and looked respectfully into the exasperated, glaring face. The girl patted her father's shoulder soothingly; and after a moment he reached up and his hand closed upon his daughter's. His face cleared, then broke into a hearty smile.

'Boy, you've got enough pride to outfit all the kings of Europe — only they don't have that sort of pride! But I guess I understand things from your point of view now, and I guess I like you all the better for your feeling the way you do. Suppose we put the proposition like this: I'll lend you the money for college; you give me notes, bearing legal interest, the notes payable after you graduate. I think your pride will admit that you can earn more with a college education than you could ever earn if you went to work without one. Also, I'll guar-

antee to find you a decent job after graduation. There you are — a cold, unemotional, damned Shylock business proposition. What's your pride got to say to that?'

There was further discussion then, and more discussion in the days that followed. But, in its essentials, this was the plan that finally was agreed upon.

Ten minutes after this talk, Jerry was sitting beside Donaldson in the stand. Down in the court, No. 2 and No. 3 were playing spectacularly; at his side Donnie was making shrewd helpful comments upon the play to him. But Jerry neither saw the game, nor heard the pointers his idol was giving him.

After all, he was to have this great opportunity he had discovered: the social chances, the business chances, that came from mixing with these fine people through one's tennis skill. What a glorious opportunity!

And, after all, he was going to have the chance to become what Donnie had said

he had it in him to become! Champion! Champion of champions! . . .

And, after all, its barriers magically removed, there stretched before him, through the years, the dazzling, dream-loved trail of glory. . . .

For Jerry MacAllister, that was his day of days.

CHAPTER III

JERRY AND TOMMIE

THE passing years proved Donaldson, tennis player extraordinary, a prophet of just ordinary merit. Regarding Jerry he had made two prophecies. On these prophecies he broke even.

Jerry never blew Donaldson off the court. In fact they never again met in a championship match. Before Jerry had reached his maturity as a player, that astounding thing had happened which still mystifies all followers of tennis.

The year after his match with Jerry, Donaldson, by his solitary brilliance, almost won the Davis Cup matches for America at the West Side Tennis Club. That was the dazzling climax of his spectacular career. Then the magic of his racquet began to leave him. Thereafter, for a very brief period, Donaldson shone as a promise, or as an

ardent hope, in the breasts of his million followers; but soon thereafter the great tournaments knew the flashing Donaldson no longer save as a glorious memory.

But in that part of his prophecy where Donaldson was right, he was overwhelmingly right. The August before his senior year in college, Jerry won the National Championship. He had the fortune to go through the war uninjured; and by his play in Davis Cup matches and in English and French tournaments he won the unofficial title of World's Champion, and thereafter he was regarded as the greatest player tennis had ever produced.

Jerry had what were Donaldson's chief assets: speed, and more speed; energy, and more energy; but these he called upon only as he needed them. And he had that native and developed technique of catgut strung upon a racquet that a Kreisler or a Heifetz has of gut strung upon a somewhat differently fashioned bit of wood.

But if one were to pick out the one point

of Jerry's surpassing game, which was superior to the other points, fundamental to them, it would be his foot-work. On the day of their first match, Donaldson had spoken of Jerry's foot-work. Perhaps only the students of high-class tennis understand fully the importance of the correct and instinctive use of the feet.

It is the bow that directly calls the stirring tone from the violin; it is the racquet that sends the ball on its spectacular flight. But, before the bowing, it is the agile, accurate, inspired fingers of the left hand that put the strings into position for the bow of a Kreisler or a Heifetz to evoke its thrilling tone; and just so, before the stroking, it is the agile, accurate, inspired feet of a Jerry MacAllister that bring his racquet into position for its applauded shots.

He had everything, had Jerry. But it was Jerry's foot-work, so said the critics, that lifted him above all other players. It was his agile, intuitive feet that made him supreme, alone.

It was only natural that Jerry should become his country's tennis idol. There are some great players who are applauded, even worshiped, by the public for their tennis skill, and who are privately detested by their fellow players for their personal faults — selfishness, meanness, vanity. There are other great players who are loved by their bitterest rivals — they are so fair, so generous, so human, so un-self-seeking, so unpretentious, so eager to give and praise. Of this latter sort was Arthur Donaldson in his day. And of this sort was Jerry MacAllister.

And of this same sort was Tommie Gordon.

And now this history comes to the second of the two great discoveries Jerry made about intensified, glorified modern tennis. The statement of this second discovery can perhaps best be left to be made in Jerry's own words.

It was the day of the finals of the National Championship at the West Side Tennis Club at Forest Hills, and Jerry was once

again fighting for his title. (It may be proper here to give notice that Jerry's court battles are not the chief subject-matter of this history.) The stands and the clubhouse porch were tense with ten thousand excited silent player-spectators; for a big tennis crowd differs from a big baseball crowd, or a big fight crowd, in that the crowd not only watches the game, but also plays it. Across the net from Jerry, the greatest player in the world, was his greatest rival and greatest friend, little Tommie Gordon, the second greatest player in the world. The championship match was in its fifth set; all the way through, on both sides of the net, it had been a succession of breath-taking impossibilities. Every bitter rally, every point scored, had been worthy of the world's two greatest.

When Jerry sent the final point whizzing down Tommie's backhand side-line, raising a chalky puff, the great crowd, their tensity at last ended, rose and cheered and clapped their hands, and excitedly sent their white

cushions sailing through the air to pelt down upon the vast billiard-table of turf like huge snowflakes. Jerry, their idol, was still their idol! Jerry, the unbeatable, was still unbeaten!

Little Tommie Gordon came running around the net, his hand held out to Jerry. This was once again the moment which the traditions of tennis have given over to the vanquished and his victor.

'Jerry, you old skeezicks,' grinned Tommie, as their hands gripped. 'You've handed me another lacing. You're a monopoly, Jerry — a blooming trust. I ought to sic this Sherman Anti-Trust Law onto you, and bust your old combine wide open!'

Jerry's arm had slipped about Tommie's shoulder, just as several years before Champion Donaldson's arm had slipped about his own.

'Tommie,' Jerry whispered intensely, 'all during the match I was praying for you to come through and beat me out!'

'Aw, quit your kidding. Like heck you

were! Anyhow, you didn't play the way you prayed. You were a doubles team all by your lonesome, with a racquet everywhere.'

Jerry's hand fiercely closed upon the shoulder of the other.

'All the same, I was praying for you to win! I couldn't hand you the match; I wanted you to outplay me — lick me. Tommie, *you've got to lick me!* There's no other man who can. It's up to you, Tommie — you've got to take the title away from me!'

Tommie stared at his friend. In Jerry's face he read that these incredible words were in passionate earnest.

'For the love of Mike, Jerry,' he ejaculated, 'are you nutty? What are you driving at?'

But the brief moment sacred to victor and vanquished was already over. Officials and press photographers were bearing down upon the two.

'I'll tell you to-night when we get to our room after the blow-out,' Jerry whispered rapidly.

Jerry posed alone, and then with Tommie, for the press cameras, the while the big crowd still cheered and threw their cushions. This giant demonstration Jerry received with his infectious, unassuming smile; received it easily, for Jerry had had the applause of what was left of the royalty and nobility of Europe, and the applause of all of the great of the earth who like tennis. Then arm linked in Tommie's, the crowd still cheering, he crossed to the clubhouse.

Graham, despite his fifty-odd years, came bounding down the clubhouse steps, and seized Jerry in a bear-hug.

'You've done it again, Jerry — I knew you would!' his big voice boomed out exultantly, so clear above the general din that all the other high officials on the clubhouse porch could hear his every word. 'Good old Jerry — great old Jerry! Nobody can beat you! America can lick the world at tennis so long as she has you! And with your kind of a game you'll lead the procession for a dozen years yet — maybe twenty. You'll

last as long as Norman Brookes! While you last, America has the world licked!'

The beribboned potentates of tennis on the porch smiled at this outburst. The excitable Billy Graham — over-excitable in this instance, for he regarded Jerry as his own prodigy — had indeed spoken the truth. While Jerry's game lasted, America's supremacy was not likely to be seriously menaced; and Jerry had the kind of game that might last as long as Graham had said, for his game was based chiefly upon an amazing skill, and not chiefly upon a furious expenditure of energy, as was the great Donaldson's, which quickly burns a man down to the mere ashes of himself. In Jerry's hands American tennis was safe, and Jerry belonged to American tennis — consciously or unconsciously they all thought this.

Graham gave Jerry another hug, and joyously repeated himself. 'Good old Jerry — great old Jerry! While you last, America has the world licked — and you'll last for twenty years!'

'Aren't you forgetting Tommie? He pushed me to the limit, Uncle Billy.' The close relationship between these two had in the years changed 'Mr. Graham' to 'Uncle Billy.'

'I'm not forgetting Tommie for one second!' returned Uncle Billy. 'That was a grand fight you put up, Tommie — a grand fight! Only you know there's only one Jerry MacAllister!'

During these last words, Jerry, flushing, had moved forward and taken the hand of Elizabeth Graham, who had come eagerly down the steps just behind her father. Her blue eyes were gloriously asparkle. She was a fine-grown young woman now of the frank, alert type that is the happy combination of education and outdoor sport. She was ranked as No. 3 among American women players, and she and Jerry had fought out hundreds of friendly matches.

'You were simply wonderful, Jerry — wonderful!' she cried, and both her hands tightly gripped his.

'Thanks, 'Lizabeth — I was doing my

best,' he said a bit awkwardly. Despite their having practically grown up together these last several years, Jerry was still a trifle embarrassed with 'Lizabeth whenever their relationship toward each other approached the emotional.

'You were simply wonderful, Jerry! And so were you, Tommie!' 'Lizabeth started to hold out her hand to Tommie, but the hand shifted its direction, went around Tommie's sun-reddened neck, and she kissed him. 'You are both wonderful — and both dears — and I'm proud of you both!'

At her impulsive kiss, Tommie flushed through his freckles, then he shot at Jerry a challenging glance of affectionate malice.

There followed an hour or two of further praise for Jerry and Tommie about the clubhouse; they were the honored figures of that night's banquet and speech-making, which topped off the tournament; and at midnight the world's greatest player and the world's second greatest player entered the hotel room which they shared together.

For three years they had been fighting each other on the courts, all over the courts, and during these three years, whenever possible, they had been room-mates in hotels, and when traveling had shared the same sections and staterooms of sleeping-cars and the same cabins of ships. American amateur sport had never produced two clearer-thinking, cleaner-living, squarer young men than these two great rivals and greater friends.

CHAPTER IV

WHERE THE TRAIL LED

TOMMIE seated himself approximately on the nape of his neck, his customary attitude of relaxation, and opened the proceedings with mock formality.

'I believe, Mr. MacAllister, you started to make a speech upon the court this afternoon, which same speech you said you wanted to finish when we got home to-night. Do you, or do you not, now wish to finish that speech?'

'I sure do!'

Tommie mimicked the orotund manner and tone of the man who had umpired their match that afternoon.

'All ready, gentlemen? . . . Play! . . . Mr. MacAllister now serving!'

Mr. MacAllister began to serve.

'Here comes my first ball. As I told you, Tommie, I've got to be licked, and licked square, and it's up to you to lick me!'

'Mr. Gordon returns the service for a clean placement. Without asking you the "why" of all this, Jerry, I'll just ask you the "how." How am I to lick you? Not counting our practice and exhibition matches we've played twelve big tournament matches. Of these twelve I've won just one, and I won that by default. You'd had a touch of ptomaine, came on the court about fifty per cent present, and fainted on the court in the fourth set! I don't call that a win. The best fight I ever made against you, I made to-day. I'll never do better. My point, Mr. MacAllister. Score, love fifteen. Mr. MacAllister still serving.'

'But, Tommie — *I tell you I've got to be licked!* You are the only player in sight who can possibly do it. There's no use our pulling any false-modesty stuff, Tommie. We know we're the two best in the world. Allerton, that Australian player that people think should be at No. 3 in the world's ranking, is a corking player all right, and a fine chap — but we've both beaten him, and

we can both beat him any time we start against him, when we're in shape. That's the truth, isn't it, Tommie?'

'It's the truth — so far.'

'Then don't you see it's strictly up to you?'

'And don't you see I can't turn the trick?'

'Don't you want to lick me?'

'There's nothing I want to do so much in all the world! For three years I've been trying my darndest — you've been about all that's stood between me and the championship. I never have quit to you in a match, I'm not quitting now, and I'll not quit if we ever play again. But you're too good for me, Jerry. Not much — but a shade that's just enough. And you always will be. You're so infernally consistent; always at the top of your game. The fact that I'm a year younger than you won't make any difference. It's as though I held forty-nine per cent of the stock and you held fifty-one per cent. I may feel I have an awful lot, that I am almost boss; but when it comes to a real showdown, things go just the way you,

with your fifty-one per cent, want them to go. And that's that.'

'But, Tommie,' the champion insisted desperately, 'I tell you you've got to lick me! You!'

'And again the echo answers "willing." And again the echo, getting a little bored, repeats how the devil is it going to be done? On the level, I mean. For on the level's the only way I'd care to lick you, and it's the only way you'd ever be willing to be licked. Spill it, Jerry — how?'

'I don't know how! But somehow! We've got to find the how!'

'Say, Jerry, this talk is just chasing a black cat in the dark. I tell you there is no "how"! But I've been patient long enough. What's the "why" of all this? The greatest player in the world asking to be licked — wow, that's got me dizzy! Don't you like tennis any more? Don't you like being champion?'

'You know I love both!'

'Then just what the dickens is the matter

with you? Or are you suddenly just gone plain nutty?'

'I've got to get out of tennis for my own good. I don't mean out of playing tennis for fun; there's no need of my getting out of that sort of tennis. I mean tournament tennis, championship tennis. And the only possible way I can see to get honorably out of championship tennis is to be honestly beaten by a better man. Now do you get my situation?'

'Only partly. You say you've got to be honestly beaten by a better man — and we know there is no better man. That much I understand. But why do you want to be beaten? That's what I can't get. Come clean, Jerry. What's eating you?'

And then Tommie had what he thought was a flash of understanding. 'Hello — girl stuff, is that what's behind all this? 'Lizabeth?'

'That's part of it — yes.'

'See here, old son, you're not sore because 'Lizabeth kissed me this afternoon, and only shook your hand? 'Lizabeth kissed me be-

cause she loves tennis, and she didn't kiss you because she loves you. I guess you know, all right, that 'Lizabeth loves you.'

'I think 'Lizabeth loves me,' Jerry said frankly. 'I know I love 'Lizabeth. Here's the trouble there: I can't talk about love to her — at least I won't talk about love to her — so long as I'm nothing but a tennis champion.'

'You're getting deeper and deeper! What *is* eating you? If you want me to understand, you'd better shoot the whole works.'

Jerry gazed straight at his loyal old friend; thought intently — hesitated; then his manner became determined.

'All right, Tommie. But to shoot the whole works and make you understand, I've got to go over a lot of things that you know just as well as I do. To go back to the beginning: When I was a kid, playing my first season in the big tournaments, I made a great discovery. This discovery was that a crack tennis game was a great asset. It helped you to mix among big people, it

opened the doors of opportunity to you — social opportunity, business opportunity.'

Tommie nodded. 'I made that same discovery. A year or two after you did.'

'I was poor, and thought that discovery wouldn't ever mean anything to me. But because I had a nice game several people were good to me — first Arthur Donaldson, then Uncle Billy Graham. Of course at the very start there was Old Cunny; he made me a player, and I can never be thankful enough — he's one grand man, Old Cunny. But since I first played at Newport, it's been Uncle Billy. Uncle Billy sent me through college, and then gave me a job in his office, and I'm still working with Uncle Billy. At least I'm supposed to be working.'

'Ditto again,' said Tommie. 'I was as poor as you were. Substitute Garry Weston for Billy Graham — Garry's just as big a tennis bug as Billy, and I guess is a lot richer — and you have the same story. Clear enough so far. Go ahead.'

'I gave Uncle Billy notes for the money to

pay my way through college. I haven't paid a cent on these notes. Uncle Billy hasn't pressed me. Instead, he laughs and tells me to forget them. But I can't forget them. My salary in Uncle Billy's office, mixing in the company I do and traveling around so much, just covers my personal expenses. I've got an office desk of my own, but I don't get down to it for more than an hour or two a day; and for weeks and months at a stretch I don't get down at all. I'm now being paid a hundred dollars a week. To the business I'm not worth a hundred cents!'

Once more Tommie nodded. 'Carbon copy here. As Garry Weston's personal secretary, my only duty is to play tennis. As secretary, I'm not worth a dime, and he won't let me earn the dime.'

Jerry's intense face now grew more intense; from his soul there poured the things that had long been secretly festering there.

'Now I come to what is eating me, Tommie. I made a second discovery about tennis — championship tennis. The way

modern championship tennis has developed and intensified, it's not possible for a man to be a star player and be anything else. Or much of anything else. The thing's not humanly possible! The game takes all a man's energy, and most of his time, to gain the skill and physical condition, and then to keep the skill and condition. Could Willie Hoppe have been billiard champion for fifteen years if he'd given billiards a few hours of his leisure a week? — or could old man Morgan have been the world's champion banker if he'd given to banking his Saturday half-holidays and the tail-end of an afternoon once a week? Well, being tennis champion, and keeping up the business of being tennis champion, requires just as much concentration as being billiard champion or banking champion!'

Tommie nodded agreement, but did not speak. Jerry's torrent of impassioned words poured on.

'How can a champion be anything else but just a champion — so long as he's

champion? Take my last year — take my last eighteen months. Check it up yourself, Tommie; you were with me a lot of the time. Winter before last I had to play in the South — exhibition matches; then I had to play in the indoor tournaments; then, in the beginning of the outdoor season, more exhibition matches; then I was sent to France and Belgium, winding up in England with that so-called World's Championship Tournament at Wimbledon; then back to America for the big tournaments ending with the National Tournament; then the barnstorming trip you and I took to show the tennis fans of the Middle West and the West how we played; then off with you for Australia for the Davis Cup matches; then back to America for our exhibition matches on the Coast; then the Eastern indoor tournaments again — the spring exhibition matches — the big tournaments again — the Davis Cup matches again — and once more the National Tournament, ending with our fight to-day. I tell you, Tommie, no business man,

no professional man, has given himself with more concentration and more energy to his affairs than I gave myself during this period to tennis! And all that tremendous effort has not earned me a single dollar! And it has not helped me forward one inch in a real career!'

Once more Tommie nodded. 'Go ahead, Jerry — get the rest of it out of your system.'

'Understand, Tommie, I'm not knocking the game. Nor the people who manage it. Both have done a lot for me, and I like both. I'm just telling you the cold facts of the development of modern championship tennis — telling the facts as they affect me personally. I'm not blaming anybody. I'm not saying what should be done. I'm just saying what's happened. And that great fact can't be disputed, that a man can't be a great star and keep on being a great star and be much of anything else. Look over the great stars of the past, I mean those who kept on through years and years trying to be great

stars — and I can tell you, for I know, how hard it is not to want to keep on being a star when you know you have it in you to be one! — look them over, and how many of them have made good in a really big way, made good on their own efforts?'

Tommie thought a moment. 'Mighty few,' he conceded.

'Fewer than that! I tell you, the thing's humanly impossible! It's like I just said: as if old man Morgan had tried to become banking champion by giving his leisure hours to banking. And think what some of the once-greats have come to! They gave their twenties and part of their thirties to being great at tennis, and so never had time to learn a real job. And now — poor fellows! Why, even Uncle Billy — '

Jerry broke off; then went doggedly ahead: 'It may seem rotten ingratitude for me to lug in Uncle Billy. But consider a rich man like Uncle Billy. He's always given his best energies and thoughts to amateur sports. When he was thirty-five

his father died, and Uncle Billy became the head of the business. He'd never learned much about it — he hadn't had time — and so he's let his salaried managers run it for him. I don't know much about his business either; I likewise haven't had time; but I've learned this much — this is strictly confidential, Tommie — his business isn't half, perhaps not a quarter, what his father left him, and it's in such a mess that unless some one takes hold who really cares, he's likely to go on the rocks. I've tried to tell him this, but he's laughed at me good-naturedly. He thinks I don't know anything except tennis — and in that I guess he's right.'

Jerry paused. Again Tommie thoughtfully nodded, and made no comment. Then abruptly, with the same fierce intensity, Jerry went on.

'Take our great women players. Somehow I've always thought — at least since I've been grown up — that the finest and biggest thing a woman can do is to have children. Run your mind over the women top-

notchers, those who have tried to keep remaining at the top — those you can remember. Either they haven't married, or if they have married they've not had babies. I'm not saying this has really been their motive; I don't know their motive. But I know what I think. Women become intoxicated with the glory of being a great star just the same as men — with them the idea of being a supreme star is just as likely to become the one big all-dominating idea — and a woman knows perfectly well that having a baby will not only interfere with her game for a year or so, but may possibly slow her up forever. Just at this moment I can think of only one woman star who is an outstanding exception to this condition.'

'She has three,' and Tommie mentioned a name.

Jerry's excited voice became yet more intense. 'Now don't you see it, Tommie? The lure of championship tennis, the applause, the glory is doing the same thing to almost all the great stars — men and women

— making them pass up altogether, or at least to some degree, the biggest things in life! I'm not trying to knock these other players. I'm knocking myself. In all this business, I'm the worst of the lot! They call me the world's greatest on the court. And I am. But off the court, at anything worth while, I'm the world's greatest dub! And this championship lure, its glory, has got me, Tommie — I love it, I'm crazy for it! — it's got me worse than if it were drink, or a drug! And if I don't break it off, I'm lost forever!'

He paused an instant for breath, then cried out with tragic intensity:

'Don't you see, Tommie? I love the glory of it all. When I was a boy I used to call this, to myself, the trail of glory. It is still that to me. But here is where that trail has led me. It has led me into a trap, a cage! I'm caught in the cage of glory! And I've got to get out of it! I've got to get out! Don't you see, Tommie?'

There could be no doubting the agonizing

earnestness of Jerry, the crisis of soul in which he was struggling. Tommie, who had straightened up, leaned forward and gripped the hand of his chum.

'I think I see it all now, Jerry,' he said simply. 'But of course I can't feel it so keenly as you do. You see I've never been champion.'

'Wait till you have been champion — then see!' cried Jerry. 'I want to be something more than just a great tennis player, Tommie — and later on something more than merely a man who used to be a great tennis player! I want to do something worth while; I want a real career; I want to make something of myself. I want that because I'm Jerry MacAllister, and I want it for Jerry MacAllister. I'm poor and I've got my own way to make and I want to make it! I'd want these things for myself, even if there wasn't 'Lizabeth. But there is 'Lizabeth. And I love her, and I think she loves me. But I've got too much pride to talk love to 'Lizabeth, no matter what she

might say, until I've begun to try to make something of myself — until I've passed the danger of becoming, in the end, just a well-dressed, respectable, popular bum!'

'If you feel the thing so strong as all this,' said Tommie, 'why don't you just walk right out of tennis? Drop the game?'

'You don't see all of my fix yet, Tommie, or you wouldn't ask such a question! I can't just walk out of tennis — drop it. You heard what Uncle Billy said this afternoon: America looks to me to maintain America's tennis supremacy. And what Uncle Billy thinks, the American tennis public also thinks. I do owe an awful lot to Uncle Billy, and to American tennis. If I walked out on the game, Uncle Billy would think me a traitor. And the tennis public, part of it, would think me a traitor. And perhaps 'Lizabeth might think the same. You know how they all feel toward me; in their way they all love me; and I simply haven't got the nerve to walk out on them!

'You remember that other thing Uncle

Billy said: that my game would last for a dozen years, and still be at its best — might even last twenty years. That's perfectly true with my type of game, and with the body I've got. And Uncle Billy and the others will keep me going for twenty more years, if I don't stop them. Twenty more years! See what I'm headed for, unless I get out?

'Now you see it all, Tommie — you surely see it all — how I'm caught in the cage of glory! I've got to get out, and get out soon, to make my start at being something, or it'll be forever too late! And the only way for me to get out, get out honorably, so all my friends won't feel I'm a traitor and so I won't feel a traitor to them — my only way out is to be honestly beaten by a better man. *There's got to be a better man* — that's my only salvation! If I'm beaten, then they'll feel American supremacy no longer depends on me. Then they'll be willing to let me go. That's my only way out, Tommie — my only way out!'

Tommie thoughtfully regarded the strained face of his friend for a long moment before he spoke.

'Are you sure Uncle Billy would feel just the way you think he would? Have you put the thing up to him?'

'Not as clearly and fully as I have to you. I haven't felt that I dared, for Uncle Billy wouldn't understand. Sports have been his real career; it's made him pretty happy, and he couldn't see why such a career shouldn't make Jerry MacAllister happy. I guess we're made a bit differently; and, besides, he's rich, and I'm not. But I've gone at Uncle Billy indirectly. I've begged him to let me give more time to the business so I could take over some of his responsibilities. He took it as a joke. He said he could easily hire ten thousand men, a hundred thousand, who could beat me at office work. But at tennis he said there was only one Jerry MacAllister in the world. He laughed and told me not to talk like a fool, and told me not to try to make a fool out of him.

'Then I tackled him from another angle: money. I said I'd like to give more time to the office, so I could learn more and be in a position to earn more from the business. He laughed again, and called me a fool; and said that if money was what was troubling me and if five thousand a year wasn't enough, he'd make it ten, or fifteen, or twenty — just as I said. Of course I refused any such increase. I'm not worth, to the business, one tenth what he's paying me now. So you see how much help, or understanding, I can expect from Uncle Billy.'

Again Jerry exploded with the passion of desperation.

'There — you've got it all now! And that brings me right back where I started from. I've got to get out of tennis — the only way I can get out honorably is to be honestly licked — you're the only man in sight who can possibly lick me — and, Tommie, it's up to you to lick me!'

'Yes,' agreed Tommie, slowly nodding,

'as you say, this brings us right back to where we started from. And at the very start, I told you my game was not good enough to lick you. Now or ever. And there we are.'

'But, Tommie — you've got to do it!'

'As I said before, Jerry, I'm willing enough. But *how?*'

'But, Tommie — ' Jerry broke off suddenly, for he had the beginning of an idea. Then he went on rapidly, breathlessly: 'I've got it, Tommie! I'll take you in hand — show you everything I know — all my tricks — I'll coach you so you'll be better than I am!'

'Why, you poor, old simp!' Tommie returned affectionately, his eyes glistening at the other. 'What in 'ell d'you think you've been doing to me these four years we've been playing against each other? You may not know it, but you've been coaching me all the time. And at the present moment I know just as much about your game as you know — except how to play it the way you play

it. Now if I had your feet — had your footwork —'

'But, Tommie,' the other interrupted desperately, 'at least let's have a try at it! It's my only way out! You'll do that much for me, Tommie!'

He paused an instant, but before there could be a reply to his appeal, he had a further inspiration and his words were again eagerly tumbling forth.

'Here's what we'll do, Tommie, if you'll only say yes! We're due for a bit of a rest before we start on our exhibition tour of the West. Two weeks at least. Uncle Billy has got a corking court at his place out on Long Island — as good as the championship courts of the West Side Club. Let's go down there for our two weeks. You know how tickled Uncle Billy will be to have us. I can fix it all up. We'll lay off for a day or two, and then we'll start in, and I'll coach you. Please, Tommie! As a favor to me!'

The next greatest player in the world thoughtfully regarded the tense, suppliant

face of the greatest player in the world. If Tommie had two supreme desires, those desires were these: first, to beat Jerry — second, to please Jerry.

'I'll tell you right now, old son,' said Tommie, 'I don't think it will do any good. But since you ask it, lead on — I'll be the goat.'

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST KEY IS TRIED

THE sporting pages of the newspapers had it that the two great tennis stars were enjoying two weeks of complete inactivity out at Mr. William Graham's summer place near Roslyn; and since the sporting editors themselves believed this announcement, the Graham home was troubled by no inquisitive reporters. Also, one item of Jerry's 'fixing it all up' related to guests at the Graham place; this he fixed through 'Lizabeth; friends were tactfully given to understand that America's two aces, after their strenuous campaign, required for their proper recuperation a period of unbroken seclusion. By such devious practices, Jerry and Tommie gained that privacy for their experiment which they desired.

After two days of rest the pair started in their work upon Uncle Billy's splendid

court. Uncle Billy was an occasional spectator, but always 'Lizabeth was over on the sideline, watching her two best men friends. Aside from father and daughter, there was no other gallery.

The daily programme varied little. First there was an hour or a little more of unstrenuous practice of strokes. During this period Jerry laid bare to Tommie his every secret of stroke, his every stratagem of offense and defense, and he drilled Tommie over and over and over in the use of all his weapons. Even Old Cunny, when Jerry was in his teens and in high school, had not labored with more care and devotion to make a star out of his youthful pupil than Jerry now labored to develop his successor out of Tommie.

After this lesson period there was each day a three-set match to test out what had been learned. In these matches the greatest player in the world and the next greatest player put forth each his best. The crowds at the famous courts at Forest Hills, New-

port, Longwood, Seabright, Wimbledon, never saw faster, more furious, more spectacular tennis, than these matches that were played before a gallery of one bright-eyed girl and occasionally her father. Each match was worthy to have brought out a crowd of ten thousand, and each, at its close, would certainly have brought the ten thousand cheering to their feet.

The newspapers, had they known of these matches, and thought them to be no more than mere exhibition matches, would certainly have written fully of the marvelous play. And had they known the real truth behind these matches, they would have been dumbfounded by the story, the story they would have excitedly made the feature of their sporting pages: the greatest player of all time, the idol of the tennis world, putting forth all his efforts to develop a player still greater than himself — a player capable of dethroning him while in his freshest, most glorious prime.

Uncle Billy, exultantly, smilingly watch-

ing his first favorite and his second favorite, had no idea of what was behind these terrific matches. Nor did 'Lizabeth.

'You boys certainly have your own original idea of how to rest!' 'Lizabeth exclaimed to them after one of the most spectacular of their fights. 'Don't you two ever get enough tennis? You're tennis gluttons, both of you! Just plain tennis hogs!'

They smiled at her, charming with her frown of mock reproof, which could not in the least conceal her pride in and fondness for them both. They let her believe what best suited her.

They played twelve of these matches. After the last, Tommie said to Jerry:

'Didn't I tell you the thing would turn out exactly the way it has? Didn't I tell you it was no use trying this stunt?'

'But, Tommie — you won two matches! If we keep on, you'll be winning more and more, till finally you'll have the edge on me!'

'Your grandmother's back-teeth I won two matches!' scoffed Tommie. 'You simply

forgot that you were playing a match, you thought you were still teaching me, and you sent over set-ups for me to try my stroke on and of course I couldn't help killing those sitters. You may call that winning, but I don't!'

'I was doing my best, Tommie! You beat me those matches because you were too good for me!'

'Aw, your grandmother's back-teeth!' was Tommie's retort.

They played this point of debate back and forth as fast and doggedly as one of their rallies on the courts. Finally Jerry, not trying for it, let Tommie's return go by him.

'Anyhow, Tommie, let's keep the thing up on our exhibition tour,' Jerry begged. 'I'm asking it of you. The idea is bound to work out — it can't help it! Come on, Tommie — as a favor to me!'

Of course Tommie could not refuse.

On their exhibition tour, which took them as far west as Omaha and as far south as New Orleans, they maintained the same

methods they had used on Uncle Billy's court on Long Island: an hour or more of practice of strokes and tactics, then a battle at full speed. The eager crowds that gathered about the best hard courts of a dozen or more States had no more guess what these two brilliant super-stars were really trying to do than had 'Lizabeth when she had been their sole spectator.

At the end of this tour, the result was practically the same as at the end of the private series out at Uncle Billy Graham's. But Jerry was determined and was insistent. When the two, late in October, parted for the winter, Jerry said:

'Tommie, while you're out on the Coast this winter' — Garry Weston was spending the winter in California and of course Tommie, his personal secretary, was to be along — 'keep up this same practice we've been at all this while. And play all the California cracks you can get to go against you. I tell you, the idea is bound to win! Just keep at it all winter, and next season

you'll take my measure. You'll be certain to!'

Again Tommie scoffed, and spoke of the futility of the plan. And again he consented. He couldn't help consenting, since Jerry asked him.

For Jerry that winter was almost the exact pattern of his past many winters. There were invitations, appeals, to show himself on almost every court where winter tennis was played; invitations which it was difficult for him to refuse, since he could not allege business or lack of physical condition as an excuse. And Uncle Billy threw all his weight behind these invitations. It was Jerry's duty, Uncle Billy alleged, to American tennis to show the followers of tennis, and particularly the younger players, how tennis was played by its greatest living player. That, declared Uncle Billy, was how interest in the game was stimulated; and, more important, how the future greats were developed; that was how American supremacy was maintained.

And so out of a sense of high duty to American tennis, which was forever dinned into him, and out of a sense of duty to Uncle Billy, Jerry yielded. With young Arthur Cameron, the latest of American stars to flash to the fore, traveling as his companion and opponent, he made the rounds of the winter resorts of Florida and adjoining States, playing almost whenever and wherever asked. Two months or more were given to this. Then Jerry was back in the North, playing exhibition matches and in the indoor tournaments in New York, Philadelphia, Boston.

That winter seemed almost endless to Jerry. His one great support, his one great hope, was the return of spring and the reappearance of Tommie in the big tournaments of the coming season: an improved Tommie, who could down him in the stiffest fight.

He looked forward to this with feverish eagerness, with an almost unbearable suspense. It was freedom that he saw — free-

dom! But this tense and strange game of tennis that was being played within him, no one ever guessed. To all, particularly to 'Lizabeth, he was the same delightful, unspoiled, care-free Jerry: always obliging, his infectious smile ever ready to leap into his honest, straight-gazing face.

No — no one ever guessed.

All this winter he heard regularly from Tommie, and what he did not get from Tommie's letters, he got from the San Francisco and Los Angeles newspapers, or he filled in with his own knowledge of tennis conditions. Tommie was practicing hard, as he had promised. And the great cracks of the Coast were delighted to furnish him as much play as he desired. For Tommie, though only an adopted native son, had lived in California much of his youth and had played his earliest tennis there, and California regarded him as really her own product. California admired Jerry both as a tennis player and as a man; but California's pride — there is no State pride which is more

intense — would have gloried to have seen Tommie on Jerry's throne. So California strove to give Tommie her best; each player gladly contributed his choicest; and down in Los Angeles the once supreme Donaldson showed Tommie all he knew.

But tennis has developed much, has taken a different trend, since the peak of Donaldson's game; and there was nothing Donaldson could show Tommie that Tommie did not already know. In their practice matches Tommie did not need to extend himself against the one-time resistless Donaldson, now grown a trifle portly and slow of foot.

All in all, no one could have given more of themselves to make Tommie champion — save only the champion himself — than the game and generous players of California. As these facts came to Jerry from day to day, his hope gained in strength. In his secret being, he seemed to live for that supreme day when Tommie, in the words the smiling, boyish Donaldson had used to

him on that far-gone day at Newport, would 'blow him off the court.'

At length spring came again, and the season for outdoor tennis, and presently the big tournaments were at hand. Before the first of these, Jerry and Tommie met after their months of separation; met in the hotel room which Jerry had reserved in advance for the two of them.

'Well, old son,' said Tommie, grinning his freckled grin as their hands met — 'we're out for another merry whirl.'

'This is to be your big season, Tommie. You know how I'm praying for you to come through!'

'If playing can answer your prayers, I'll answer 'em. I've been doing my best since I last saw you, and I'm in shape to play my best game.'

'I hope your game beats me. I want to go down — but I'll be out there fighting all the time, and I'll go down fighting.'

They clashed in the finals of three tournaments. The matches were bitterly fought,

spectacular, as were all the matches when these two met. But if Tommie had added anything to his game by his months of concentrated effort, then something had also been miraculously added to Jerry's game. For Jerry did not go down fighting. He did not go down at all.

After Jerry's third tournament victory, which came toward the middle of August, the friends once more talked the matter over in their hotel room.

'I'm sorry for your sake, Jerry,' Tommie summed up, 'and sorry for my own, for I'd like to be good enough to take the championship away from you. You've been champion several years, you've got used to it; so you can't imagine how I'd like to be champion — if only for a little while! But things have turned out exactly as I said they would; I've done my best, but your idea never had a chance. I can beat anybody in the world except you, but I can never beat you. That's settled. I've had the right dope on this from the very start, Jerry.'

Jerry nodded. He had to admit it now. Tommie had been right, and still was right.

'It's just about the way I put it to you almost a year ago when you sprung your idea on me,' Tommie continued. 'I may own forty-nine per cent of the business, but you own fifty-one per cent; and with your fifty-one per cent you'll keep on being able to swing the whole situation your way. That's about how the thing sizes up to me.'

Again Jerry nodded. As he now saw it, that was just about how the thing sized up to him, too.

After that an agony of black despair closed in upon Jerry. His great idea had failed. He had worked and waited and hoped for a year — and his great idea had failed! And he could now see no possible hope remaining in that idea.

Uncle Billy's exultant words came back to him, kept ringing and echoing through his brain. 'Good for a dozen years — twenty more years!'

A dozen more years!... Twenty more years!...

What would he be like, if he devoted himself to being champion, after a dozen years? If he put off bucking down to make his real start until he was thirty-five, what chance would he ever have? What would he be worth then and thereafter as an all-around human being? — to himself? — to 'Lizabeth?

He was caught — inescapably caught in the cage of glory! He had tried the one possible key to his cage, and it had failed to turn the lock.

But in his desperation Jerry frantically looked further out upon the tennis world, seeking relief. For him relief had only one form, a player who could beat him. His mind's eyes lighted upon Allerton, the Australian, perhaps No. 3 in the world's ranking. Allerton was a great player — a splendid man whom he truly liked and admired — a gallant-fighting, generous sportsman. But Allerton could not beat him.

With both at their best, Allerton could not beat Tommie. Besides, when Jerry lost his title, he wanted, if that were possible, to lose it to an American.

His mind's eye turned next to Arthur Cameron, that flashy youth whose brilliance had won him ranking in America just after himself and Tommie. But for all his flashy brilliance, Cameron's game was not fully developed, and was not dependable; and as yet there was no telling whether his game would ever develop dependability. And there was no telling about his temperament. At present he was flighty — inclined to become flustered, to lose his head, in crises. He might later settle down, of course. But at the very best Cameron could not possibly be better than Tommie. And Tommie was not quite good enough.

Cameron would not do. There was no one else upon all the tennis horizon. No one.

There followed the blackest hours, the blackest days, that Jerry had ever known or was ever to know. There was no hope.

None. And yet through it all Jerry went smilingly about. No one knew of the fear, the desperation, the agony, behind Jerry's smile. No one except Tommie; and even Tommie did not know the half. Tommie did not know till later — much later. Then Tommie certainly knew it all!

Presently, as the days passed, the great climax of the season drew on: the Davis Cup matches, at Forest Hills, to be followed by the National Tournament. And then, in his black desperation, a second great idea was born in Jerry's mind. Here at last was his way out! Here at last was the key to the cage into which glory's trail had led him!

The new idea dazed him. This idea he did not tell even to Tommie. He did not dare. But the idea grew and grew; and Jerry's hope, struggling up from its despair, grew with it.

CHAPTER VI

THE SECOND KEY

JERRY'S great idea was born of two related facts — more correctly, two sets of facts — concerning that tournament of all tournaments, the Davis Cup matches. Particularly was it born out of conditions peculiar to that year's matches.

The first of these facts is capable of simple statement. The championship of the nations is determined, after the elimination rounds which determine the challenging nation, by a series of five matches: four matches of singles, one match of doubles. The winner of three of these matches is the champion. If it should so happen that the ultimate victor should be so fortunate as to win the first three matches, then the remaining two matches have no bearing whatever on the championship. They are no more than exhibition matches, or 'courtesy'

matches. In World's Championship baseball these extra games are not played, the series ending with the ending of the deciding game; in Davis Cup tennis these extra matches usually are played.

No attempt will here be made to justify Jerry's reasoning based upon the foregoing facts. Jerry was not normal, was disordered and desperate, was seeing all things from the angle of, and colored by, his own personal predicament. Here it will be sufficient to state the conclusion of his reasoning. His conclusion was that, so long as the three necessary matches were won by the United States, the other two matches — no matter when played, the first match, the third match, the last match — were nothing more than exhibition matches. They had not the slightest bearing upon the championship of the nations; it was of no real importance whether these two extra matches were won or lost.

The second set of facts, as Jerry saw them, are not so obvious and cannot be so simply

stated. These facts grew out of the personnel of the two contesting teams — the American, and the Australian that had come through the challenge rounds and was America's challengers: grew out of comparing the proved playing ability of the men. The American team was made up of Tommie and himself, who the American Cup Committee and all the American followers of tennis supposed of course would each play two of the four singles matches; Moore and Singleton for the doubles, neither an individual star of the first magnitude, but through long playing together acquiring a smooth perfection of team-work against which no two great stars of the world, with conflicting temperaments and the great star's almost irrepressible instinct to play every ball himself, could hope to compete with success — with the possible sole exception of Tommie and himself; and with young Cameron as the fifth man. Cameron was not expected to play. His selection for membership on the team was in the nature of a decoration, an

incentive, for possible service to be performed in future matches; it was an indirect tribute and stimulus to the younger players growing up all over the country.

The Australian team was composed of the allowable five men; but it is here only necessary to name two, the great Allerton and the hardly less great Holden. These two were going to do what the famous Brookes and the famous Wilding had often done in earlier years, before Wilding went to his death in the fighting at the Dardanelles — carry the burden of the entire five matches between them.

To this situation Jerry applied cold mathematics; or so he believed. In the singles he could win his two matches against Allerton and Holden. And Tommie could win his two matches. And Moore and Singleton could win their doubles match against the two Australians paired. All this was a mathematical certainty. Five matches — a clean sweep of the Davis Cup series.

Five victories. That might be glorious,

but it was wholly unnecessary. Three victories were plenty. American tennis should feel glory enough in retaining possession of the cup. And the spirit of American sport should not begrudge those splendid sportsmen from the Antipodes two victories which America did not need.

We now approach the heart, the crux of Jerry's great and growing idea. At last a situation had arisen where America did not need him to maintain her tennis supremacy. Tommie could win his two singles matches. They were already the same as won. Moore and Singleton could win their doubles match. It was already the same as won. Three victories, all mathematical certainties. The cup already won — and won without any real need of his playing.

His matches, if he played them, would therefore have no bearing on the outcome. They would be nothing more than exhibition matches. Yes — at last here was his opportunity! He would not play. He would manage that — *must* manage it — somehow.

The great thing which Jerry saw was this: If America won without him — and America certainly would! — then it would have been definitely proved to America, to Uncle Billy and all the others, that American supremacy did not depend upon him; that American tennis no longer really needed him. This proved to them by the evidence of their own eyes, they would then let him go. They would let him abdicate, retire. There would be objections, arguments, many difficulties, of course; but in the end his loving and beloved Pharaoh would let him go.

And here was another great thing which Jerry saw and exulted over. If he did not play, then the major glory of the great victory would go to Tommie — to good old loyal Tommie, who for so long had had to be content with secondary honors. Also he would manage not to play in the National Tournament, and Tommie would win that. And Tommie, who had given his services so faithfully, who had fought so gamely and fairly against him these many years, would

at last be champion. No one deserved the title more than Tommie, and no one by his character could confer a greater honor upon the title than Tommie. That would be wonderful — Tommie as champion!

Still another item entered into Jerry's consideration. After all, even if he did not play, America might win more than those already-won three matches. America might even win all the five. The brilliant young Cameron, if he kept control of his temperament, if he played his best and kept his game in hand, might win his singles match against Holden; might with luck win even against the great Allerton.

Jerry next turned his thoughts to possible ways and means by which he might bring about his self-elimination. Of course he might go to the Cup Committee, argue his case before them as he had argued it before his own mind, and ask them to excuse him from playing. But that would be a useless procedure; he knew they would not excuse him. Or he might feign illness and be re-

lieved on that account. But no — that would not do either; not with Jerry MacAllister, who had not had an ill day in his tennis life except for that time when he had had that touch of ptomaine poisoning; besides, there was the danger of a doctor's examination and the discovery of the hoax.

Or he might pretend to go suddenly off his game; slump so badly that the committee would fear to play him. But, no — this third way was no better than the other two. Since he had first gained place, years ago, among the first ten, he had not once gone seriously off his game; his game was too soundly founded and too skillfully built for that; and there was again the danger that the committee might suspect, and somehow prove, that his slump was only a pretense. And besides, even if they did honestly believe that he had fallen off, they would play him anyhow; they would bank on the crisis pulling him out of his slump and upon his rising to the crisis's demands — and Jerry

knew that, once actually on the court, he would play his best game.

Ah, at last he had it! That was the way! He would be injured — a real injury — so that the committee would judge him to be in no condition to play. That would settle the thing definitely! Just a minor injury, a temporary injury, merely one that would keep him out of the game for a few weeks, but which would not seriously discommode him: that would serve his purpose. A merest trifle, that injury — but bringing what wonderful results! Of course, since no one must ever know or guess the truth, the injury would have to be self-inflicted.

A trifling, self-inflicted injury — that was it! That would save him!

Of course the injury, and the story of how he incurred it, must be plausible and convincing. He must keep plausibility in mind at every step of his planning. What should be his injury? — what most natural in itself, easiest to endure, easiest and safest to inflict? Of course a doctor might have helped

in this — but a doctor might refuse assistance and even if he gave it, despite the much-talked-of 'professional confidence' of doctors, a doctor was a possible source of betrayal. There could be no doctor in this little affair.

Plausibility. Where were tennis players most frequently injured? Rarely in hands or body, except when there is a strain resulting from overexertion or an unexpected fall, and such Jerry could not very well intentionally bring about; and a minor injury, such as he was contemplating, say a cut, would not seriously interfere with his playing if it were upon some such member as the left arm which was used only for tossing up the ball in serving and otherwise used only as a counterweight in balancing the body. That minor injury had to be in some region where players most frequently suffered injury, and it had to be inflicted in some exact spot, where, though it would not be in the least serious, it would preclude his playing.

He was getting nearer! The legs and feet

of course. These members bore the brunt, the terrific strain, of the swift rushes, the swift twists, the sudden stops, all the incessant pounding, of the players' efforts. Charley-horse, torn ligaments, heels chafed raw, blisters that grew worse and became laming — these were the common ailments that put a man out of the game. But he could not intentionally pull a charley-horse; he did not know how, and the same reasons ruled out these other common injuries. His injury had to be simpler — at least capable of more simple infliction — than any of these.

But at last he had located, and determined the exact nature, of his injury. It would be a simple cut on the foot. Not on just any part of the foot, of course. There are parts of the foot on which a simple cut would not seriously affect one's playing. The ball of the foot, where all the weight is carried, where comes all the friction, the part that has to bear the tearing strain of the body's sudden starts and violent twistings — that

was it: just a simple cut on the ball of a foot.

Jerry next considered the explanation of the cut which he would give the Cup Committee. The explanation had to be most natural, most unsuspicious. He thought, and thought. And presently he also had his explanation.

He would tell the committee that he awoke in the night, thirsty; had gone in his pajamas to his bathroom to get a drink. Before he could switch on his bathroom light he had accidentally knocked over his tumbler which had shivered on the tiled floor, and in the dark his bare foot had stepped upon a jagged piece of the broken glass. People were always stepping on bits of broken glass in their bare feet. And he could have the shattered tumbler, with the blood-stained fragment, to show them as evidence.

That would be his explanation, and a most excellent explanation it was. But in actuality, how was the cut to be inflicted? Not with a jagged piece of glass. He — well, he shrank from the idea of jabbing a piece of

jagged glass into his foot. A razor made the easiest, cleanest, most painless cut; how about making it with a razor? But, no — a razor's cut, however deep, was the merest hairline; not in the least like the cut of broken glass.

The big pocket knife he carried to help make his own repairs, if need be, upon his racquets; the largest blade, broad and thick — that would be the very thing.

He now had everything worked out. An easy plan, a simple plan — and, yes, like all plans which are based upon simplicity, a perfect plan. There remained now only the plan's consummation. This would require care, of course; constant watchfulness to see that his every point was plausible; but, on the whole, just routine business.

For the consummation of this simple plan, Jerry required a night of assured privacy. He could not do the thing here in the hotel room which he and Tommie were sharing, with Tommie always about him except when on the courts.

Jerry was thinking of pretending a message calling him out of town for a day; that would be sufficient. But in this detail good luck — he considered it good luck — came to his assistance and simplified the affair. On the fourth day before the first of the Davis matches, Garry Weston, who had taken a suite in the hotel across the corridor from his and Tommie's room, spent the night at the country place of an old friend near Tarrytown, and he insisted on his personal secretary and protégé, Tommie, coming with him.

This gave Jerry the hotel room to himself for the night. Things could not have worked out better.

But when night came on, and Jerry, in his pajamas, got ready for the act, he hesitated, shrank away from the pain of it, the sight of blood. For Jerry, despite his marvelous control of his bodily and mental faculties, was highly strung, supersensitive. The boldest man sickens when the moment comes for premeditated self-inflicted pain,

even though he may laugh at a much greater pain which has come upon him unexpectedly in consequence of an accident. The hardiest of us, even had we the skill, would hardly have the courage to pull our own aching tooth, however necessary the tooth's extraction. Jerry wished he had at least a local anæsthetic to deaden the pain. But he had no hypodermic syringe; he could not get one without a prescription; and getting one, even should he succeed in getting it, would be leaving a clue which might somehow lead to discovery.

He had to inflict his injury without any alleviating measures. So, about midnight, he proceeded about the business.

As do many athletes who are in daily or frequent contests, Jerry had always with him a small first-aid outfit. In this was a tiny spirit lamp with a pint cup for heating water. This and the other articles he needed he carried into the bathroom. He filled the cup, brought the water to a boil, sterilized his knife's big blade which previously he had

cleansed. Then seated on the bathroom chair, he scrubbed and scrubbed the sole of his left foot with alcohol; he had chosen the left foot for no other reason than, being right-handed, the left foot was the easier for him to manipulate in carrying out his plan. Then, drawing a deep breath, he raised the knife aloft.

And then, for a long moment, the arm remained stiffly upraised. Then it wavered — and then the hand holding the knife sank limply to his side and Jerry sat shivering and staring at his bare foot. He could not go through with the thing! At first he thought his hand was held back by physical repulsion, by the sheer lack of nerve to inflict an injury upon himself. But presently he realized that this had not been his deterring motive. Deep down the thing had not seemed square to him — that was what had stopped him.

With a sense of defeat, Jerry crept into his bed and lay there while despair gripped him and tortured him. Another of his great

plans for escape had come to nothing. He had to play in the matches. He was still caught in the cage of glory. Caught inescapably. For him there was no way out.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE KEY WORKED

An hour or two later, Jerry woke out of a restless sleep with that dry thirst so common in the hot nights of late August. He drowsily swung out of bed in compliance with his body's request for a drink, and crossed into his bathroom. He switched on the light, and reached for the tumbler above the porcelain wash-basin. His sleep-heavy eyes blinked in the unaccustomed light. Perhaps that was why he fumbled the glass. It slipped from his hands and splintered upon the tiled floor with a sharp report.

Startled, he instinctively took a step backward. The next instant, now suddenly wide-awake, he was sitting on the bathroom chair examining the bleeding ball of his left foot which had come down on a dagger-like fragment of thin glass adhering to the tumbler's base. The rapidity with which the

blood poured from his foot alarmed him. In his ignorance of medical matters, and especially in his lack of any sure knowledge of anatomy, he feared an artery had been severed. Fortunately he had forgotten to put away the items of his first-aid kit which he had laid out for his intentional accident, and he now applied swabs of gauze, saturated with cold water. Presently the flow of blood subsided. Reassured, he realized he had cut no important blood vessel.

His first-aid knowledge included a very considerable skill at bandaging; he was better at this than most doctors and quite as good as the average trained nurse. He carefully bandaged his left foot, then examined the job. Even if he did say it himself, that bandaging looked thoroughly professional.

He decided to let the mess in the bathroom remain to be cleaned up in the morning, as he was for the moment a bit shaken by the accident; so he crept back into his bed. Presently, as he lay there resting, a sudden thought flooded and thrilled him.

That accident was exactly in the place he had planned, was exactly of the character he had planned, to get him out of his cage! An accident had saved him — and saved him better even than his plan would have done had he been able to have gone through with his plan. For no blame could possibly be attached to a man who is put out of competition by an unpreventable accident. And here was a wound he could openly show to any surgeon. There was no scheming or deceit here — nothing to conceal — nothing to be ashamed of.

He lay there, he knew not how long, in this throbbing exultation. He was at last out of the predicament from which he had struggled to escape for a year and more. And out of it with no blame: not even secret blame!

And then presently something began to change within Jerry's overwrought brain. Exultation changed to gripping horror. This question seized upon his mind: Was that accident after all an accident? Jerry,

as have most people of the day, had read a little upon what to him were new phases of psychology: auto-suggestion — auto-hypnosis — the powers of the subconscious — the shaping of events by a subconscious purpose — even the control of material objects by subconscious mental forces. Fragments that he had met in his reading flashed feverishly through his brain — 'As a man thinks' — 'Plan a thing thoroughly, desire it with all your powers, and your subconscious self is certain to bring it to pass.'

Conviction now settled upon Jerry. This thing had not been an accident! It had happened exactly as he had premeditated; the time, the location of the wound, its character, everything else had been exactly as he had carefully planned. The only difference between the plan and the accomplished fact was the slight detail of the substitution of a blade of glass for the blade of a knife. There was only one conclusion: his injury had been the working out of his will, was the result of his volition, as cer-

tainly as if he had injured himself with a fully conscious intent!

A new fear came on Jerry, and he swung out of bed, undid his bandages, and examined the cut. It did not look at all like the jagged cut made by a bit of broken glass. It was a clean, straight cut — precisely such a cut as would have been made by his knife.

His new sense of guilt, the fact that he had intended to commit this injury with a knife and the fact that it looked like a knife wound drove Jerry to a further conclusion and a further decision. A doctor would guess at once that the wound was self-inflicted! The Cup Committee might ask to see the wound; yes, in their great concern, they would undoubtedly ask to see it, and they certainly had the right to see it. They, however, would accept his story of the accident; and not being experts could not tell the difference between a knife-cut and a glass-cut. But in their solicitude they might want to call in a doctor —

He could not have his foot examined by

their doctor! Nor, for that matter, by any doctor! He would have to be his own doctor!

After a few moments he saw the solution to this last difficulty. At the very start he would tell the committee he was having expert medical attention of his own. He would tell them that, immediately after the accident, he had called in a doctor; the skillful bandaging he had given his foot would be immediate and conclusive evidence that he was already receiving proper care. If they suggested examination by another doctor, he could put them off somehow. And he would have to keep them from seeing his mythical doctor. After they saw that he was definitely out of the Cup series, and saw that he was getting the best of treatment, they would not be too insistent, too inquisitive. Anyhow, as matters were, they were terribly busy with the business of the Cup series. Of course he'd have to make Tommie also believe all these fictions; but he could deceive Tommie, too.

He rebandaged his foot, returned the articles of his first-aid kit to their places, but otherwise left the bathroom as it was as evidence, and once more crawled into bed. He was going to report this as an accident. But a loud inner voice kept shouting at him that it was no accident, that he had done it himself.

No attempt will here be made to analyze and explain these things which happened in Jerry's mind; to say whether, in Jerry's case, the subconscious will achieved an event along the lines of a careful, conscious plan — or whether, on the other hand, the cut was a pure accident which might have happened in exactly the same way even if Jerry had never once thought of self-injury. Such matters may be left to experts in psychic phenomena. The important things in this history are Jerry's beliefs and conclusions, and the things which resulted in consequence of his beliefs and conclusions. He believed his wound self-inflicted, and he continued so to believe; this was a fact to him, and his future

conduct was based upon his regarding it as a fact.

Over the telephone the next morning Jerry, controlling his sense of guilt, told Uncle Billy in a half-humorous tone of his absurd little accident of the previous night. Within an hour Uncle Billy and another member of the Cup Committee hurried, alarmed, into his room; and a moment later, Tommie and Garry Weston, returned from their night at Tarrytown, came in behind them. To these four, Jerry, smiling, taking the whole matter lightly, told of what had happened when he had got out of bed to get a glass of water in the dark and, awkward fool that he was, had knocked over a tumbler; and he showed them the evidence of the bathroom, the splotches and smears of blood, the fragments of glass, and the blood-stained bit that had done the ugly business; and, with adroit casualness, having made them note the trim professional bandaging of his foot, he told of having promptly called in the doctor who was caring for him.

It may be here stated that not then, nor at any later time, did they suggest examination by, or consultation with, any other doctor. Medically the thing to them was obviously a trifle, and Jerry already was obviously receiving adequate treatment.

Of course they asked to see the wound. Jerry unwound his skillful bandages and showed them the gash in the ball of his left foot. It looked a trifle — most unimportant; but to these four men, at that moment, it looked the most important thing in all the world. They gazed at it in appalled silence. At length Uncle Billy spoke.

'Good God — think of such an accident happening! And at just such a time! Think of it! Can you play with your foot like that, Jerry?'

'That's for you gentlemen to decide,' said Jerry.

Tommie groaned. Being an active player, he understood the handicap of that injury more clearly than the others.

'If the thing had happened to you any-

where else except just there, Jerry, it mightn't have mattered! But there, on the ball of your left foot! Where all your weight is when you swing your body into your service! Just where your foot twists around, in serving, in putting stuff on the ball! There — of all the places! God! — of all the rotten, rotten luck!'

'Think you can play with a foot like that, Jerry?' repeated Uncle Billy.

'That's for you men on the committee to say,' Jerry again returned.

Uncle Billy turned to Tommie.

'What do you think, Tommie? Could you play with such a foot?'

'I don't know. The thing couldn't possibly have happened in a worse place. Not possibly! Of course I could start, if it didn't hurt me. But if it got to hurting me — well, it's just as I said, the thing couldn't be in a worse place, and if it hurt me much — and it'd likely hurt me a lot, being just there — it might throw me away off my game.'

There was silence. Jerry waited for them

to see, of their own accord, the inevitable logic of the situation. Presently Garry Weston, who had said nothing up to then, burst out:

'Why risk Jerry?' he exclaimed. 'We've got the cup won without him!'

'How's that?' demanded Uncle Billy.

'We've been figuring so much on making a clean sweep of all five matches that we've just plain forgotten to think that three victories will win for us just as well. And we've got the three. Tommie will win his two singles. And Moore and Singleton will win the doubles. We can play Cameron in the other two singles, and it won't hurt us if he drops both. There you are: we've got three matches safe!'

At this Jerry felt a swift glow of triumph. Garry Weston had reasoned it out exactly as Jerry had figured it out. And Jerry himself could not have put it to these men better.

'I see,' admitted Uncle Billy. 'But, Jerry — how about the National Tourna-

ment? Think you can play in the National Tournament?'

'Can't we let that wait till we see how my foot gets on?' countered Jerry. 'Personally, I'm more concerned about these Cup matches.'

'Yes, let's let the National Tournament wait,' agreed Garry Weston. 'Plenty of time to worry about that. But the business of Jerry and the Cup matches — that's immediate.'

So they discussed Jerry and the Cup matches. They decided that Jerry should not play.

Exactly as he had planned, he was eliminated from the tournament of all tournaments: the tennis glory of all tennis glories.

That is, they decided that Jerry should not play unless emergency should demand it.

'Right there's an important point,' declared Uncle Billy. 'I'm hoping that after all Jerry will be able to play. Now if we do want to use Jerry, we can't let the public know just what's wrong with him.'

'Why not?' demanded Garry Weston. 'We've certainly got to make some public explanation for not starting Jerry, or there'll be a hell of a row.'

'Sure we've got to give an explanation. But we don't have to tell the exact thing that's wrong with him. Suppose we told the truth about Jerry's foot, and then Jerry had to go in and play. What would Jerry's opponent do? You know the first rule of tennis strategy: play for the other man's weakness. Jerry's opponent would naturally start right off to play to that left foot. Jerry would be chased all over the court, would be lamed by the pounding and slowed up. For Jerry's sake, in case we do play him, we've got to keep his weakness covered up.'

'I get you, and you're right,' agreed Garry Weston. 'But what shall we say is wrong with Jerry?'

They discussed this point, and decided that their announcement, when made, would be that Jerry had been weakened by a sharp

attack of indigestion. But there was to be no advance announcement of his misfortune and the fact that he was not to play; and they themselves would hold back from announcing the names of their entry for each singles event until the last moment allowed under the rules governing the Cup matches. Only the five in the room were to know the exact situation, and Jerry was made to promise to keep the secret.

'Here's another idea, a sop to the public,' remarked Garry Weston. 'We all know what a lot of talk there's been in tennis circles in favor of giving our younger stars experience in Davis Cup play. We're strong at present, but even so we should be carefully building up our strength for the future — that's the line of the argument. Well, when we announce that Jerry's unfit to play, one of us can give out an interview to the effect that after all this dark cloud has its bit of silver lining. It gives us a chance to put into actual practice the idea that's been discussed so much. It gives us the chance

to give Cameron seasoning and experience for future years.'

'Good idea, Garry,' Uncle Billy approved. 'We'll undoubtedly do that. It ought to help.'

These matters determined, the three older men departed, after sympathizing with Jerry, and gripping his hand and patting his back and doing all else they could by act and word to express their sympathy and to cheer him up in his misfortune.

At last Jerry and Tommie were left to themselves. Tommie regarded his friend and rival with his direct, honest eyes.

'Of course, you know just as well as I do, Jerry, so there's no use trying to hide it, that in a way your bad luck is my good luck.'

'How do you figure that, Tommie?'

Jerry knew very well how it was figured.

'If you played, you'd be the big show, and you'd deserve to be. With you out of it, and if we take three matches, as we certainly should, and keep the cup, why, you see, I, having won two of the three matches — and

I should certainly win my two — why, that automatically makes me the hero of the series.'

'You deserve to be!'

'And if you don't play in the Nationals, I should win that, too. Again your bad luck is my good luck; it will probably make me Champion.'

'You deserve to be that, too, Tommie!' Jerry declared. 'The way you've been trying, no man's ever deserved it more!'

'God knows I've wanted to be an outstanding Davis Cup hero!' Tommie burst forth with sudden intensity. 'And God knows I've wanted to be Champion! I've wanted them both! But Heaven knows I've never wanted to get them in any such way as this!'

Jerry knew that Tommie was speaking the truth.

'And what's more,' Tommie continued, 'if this rotten luck had to happen to one of us, God knows that I wish it had happened to me!'

And again Jerry knew that Tommie was speaking nothing more than God's truth. It thrilled him, this loyalty, this utter sportingness of Tommie. And it shamed him, this deceit he was practicing upon one as open and fair and honest as Tommie.

But he had to deceive Tommie. There was no other way. And so Jerry forced this shame out of his mind and soul.

Now that the strain of planning the thing, and the strain of putting the thing through, were all over, now that all was settled and his plan was an assured success — for the matches, however exciting they might be during the playing, were already no more than cold mathematical certainties as far as they concerned his plan — Jerry began to experience the reaction natural to his temperament. How he wished he were going to be out there playing the game! Every muscle of him longed for it; for every muscle of a great, inspired athlete, for all its coöperation and coördination and identification with all other muscles and nerves,

has in a way a soul of its own, with its own desire for expression and satisfaction and its own localized disappointment when its desires are denied. Jerry loved the game. No man ever loved it more. He loved the exciting struggle with a worthy opponent, he loved the sheer physical joy his splendid, supple body felt when it was unleashed and being extended, he loved that artist's exultation which came with every ball which went skimming back over the net exactly as his finished skill had appointed — and he loved the applause, the worship, of the great crowds. There is no use trying to deny this, for Jerry did not try to deny it to himself; he loved being loved, he loved being an idol.

And now he could never do any of these things again, he could never feel any of these things again. He was through with all these things forever — through with them through his own volition, his own act! Through forever!

Jerry suffered.

But he tried to pull himself out of this

mood — or rather, tried to drive this mood out of himself. In a measure he succeeded; but only in a measure. He made himself think of his plan, and his dire necessity for such a plan. And he made himself examine his plan; go over and over its every detail. The more he examined his plan, now that it was all finished, the more did he admire it. It was complete, without a flaw, every contingency provided against. It was a great achievement, a plan like that.

Yes, it was indeed a perfect plan! Merely to wait — that was all he now had to do.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCERNING BEST-LAID PLANS

YES, it was a perfect plan.

Bobbie Burns has written an oft-quoted apothegm concerning best-laid plans. Some people, disillusioned and embittered by the outcome of inspirations which at their birth seemed beatifical certainties, go so far as to declare that in the text of Bobbie's poem 'aft' is a printer's error for 'aye,' and that therefore what the poet really wrote was not an apothegm upon best-laid plans, but an epitaph.

Be that as it may, something of whatever truth there is behind the saying of the Scottish poet began to show itself in Jerry's well-laid plan on the day before the opening of the Cup matches. And the points at which, and the manner in which, Jerry's plan began first to gang a-gley, were the very last in which Jerry would have thought his inspired idea

could have gone wrong, had the event not actually happened. The thing, with its significance, had simply never entered Jerry's mind as a possibility.

The event by which Bobbie Burns began to prove the soundness of his saying was the unexpected appearance in Jerry's hotel, and in Jerry's room, of Old Cunny.

Old Cunny was really not so terribly old. 'Old' had been bestowed upon Cunningham, not because of years, but because of affection. Old Cunny had been Old Cunny since he was eighteen; he had been perhaps twenty-eight when he had first taken the fourteen-year-old Jerry in hand; on the day he came into Jerry's room Old Cunny was forty or thereabouts. His hair was beginning to thin and grizzle; his clothes were neutral in cut and color and, though not shabby, had the appearance of long and careful wear. In the manner in which he carried his spare, erect figure there was a reticence, a diffidence, which seemed to hold strangers at a distance or which with

strangers seemed to withdraw him deep into himself — in point of fact, Old Cunny, full of liking for all sorts of people, was cursed with the disease of incurable shyness. All in all, Old Cunny was a figure of a man who, if you did not know him, would hardly interest you to the extent of drawing a second glance. But if you only knew Old Cunny!

Since that far day at Newport when the boy Jerry had eagerly told Arthur Donaldson what Old Cunny had done for him, Jerry had seen little of his teacher. The tennis adoption which had transplanted Jerry into the East was the cause of this physical separation. But there had been no spiritual separation: on the other hand, there had been a growing together, a deepening; the original boy-man, pupil-teacher affection had intensified, broadened. There had been frequent letters all these years. In Jerry's affections — his man affections, that is — Old Cunny had a place right beside the place of Tommie. Jerry liked many other men, felt gratitude toward many; but all

others were in a lower place — at least a different place — from Old Cunny and from Tommie.

This was true even of Uncle Billy. Uncle Billy and Old Cunny held a very similar relation at different periods toward Jerry's life; both were generous, fine, both had taken him up. But there was a subtle difference which Jerry sensed: unconsciously sensed, for he never analyzed the difference and resolved it into characterizing words. The difference was this: Uncle Billy, liking Jerry and his tennis ability, had given generously out of an abundance so great that such gifts would hardly be missed. Old Cunny, liking Jerry and his tennis ability, having no worldly gifts to give, had given his time, his patience, his skill, his very self. Out of his poverty, Old Cunny had given his all.

After Old Cunny and Jerry had exchanged the preliminaries of greeting, and were seated gazing at each other, Old Cunny exclaimed, his usually reserved face glowing with happiness:

'Of course, Jerry, you know why I'm in New York!'

Jerry knew that Old Cunny came from an old Massachusetts family and that he had not been East for ten years. So Jerry answered:

'Passing through here, I suppose, on your way to see some of your relatives up Boston way.'

'Relatives be hanged!' exclaimed Old Cunny. 'They've each cared about one hang apiece for me! Jerry,' he exulted, 'I've never seen the real Jerry MacAllister play, and I've come on for the Davis Cup matches! I've come on to see you beat the world!' And Old Cunny's armor of reserve all gone, he glowed in supremest happiness upon the prodigy he had fathered.

As understanding of this situation came home to him, Jerry almost died. Only with the greatest effort did he control himself.

But understanding as Jerry was, Jerry did not quite understand all, for he did not know all. As Old Cunny had said, during

all these years since Jerry had become a star, Old Cunny had not once seen his marvel play, for the great championship matches are all played in the East. Old Cunny, once teacher of English back in the high school of the Middle West, was true enough now principal of that same high school — and a splendid principal, for he loved his work and considered teaching the noblest work a man can do. But during these years Old Cunny had been playing the closest, bitterest sort of match with that grimmest, most tenacious of all opponents, Domestic Economics. His was really a most commonplace story. The three children were now five children, and one of the five was sickly and required the expensive treatment of a specialist; and even the salary of that highly important person, a high-school principal, is pinchingly small, though considered by the public a munificently adequate return for merely educating the young.

Old Cunny had never come East to see

Jerry play and triumph in a big tournament, for the simple and sordid and commonplace and compelling reason that in all these years he had not had the dollars to spare for the trip. And in these years, though there had been the usual summer interruption of school work, he had had, for that same lack of dollars, no real vacation. But this last year, with the chance of seeing Jerry as his driving inspiration, by miracles of self-denial and by some tutoring which he had crowded into an already overcrowded life, Old Cunny had managed to save two hundred dollars — barely enough to bring him to New York, keep him there four or five days and carry him back to the little city of his high school. And here he was, on his only holiday in almost fifteen years of service, and no other holiday in sight — here he was, joyous, expectant, exultant, to see his Jerry play. Yes, see even more: he was here to see his own higher tennis self in action; to see what he had once dreamed of being, but which it was not in him to be; to see, after

long waiting, his personal dreams come true in Jerry.

'Had a bit of luck this last year, Jerry,' the happy Cunny bubbled on. 'I didn't send you word I was coming because I wasn't certain till the very last I could get away; Betty's condition, you know. When the doctor said it would be safe for me to leave for a week, I didn't wire you; thought I'd rather just walk in on you this way and surprise you!'

And then, with a kind of awe in his joyousness:

'It seems too good to be true, Jerry — that at last I'm actually going to see you play! I've read all I could find about every big match you've ever played; I've read about all your strokes; I've imagined how you play — and now, at last, I'm actually going to see it with my own eyes! The greatest player of them all — playing in the greatest of all matches!'

Yes, Jerry almost died. Old Cunny, his discoverer, his real maker, after long waiting,

after incredible self-denial and self-sacrifice, was at last here for the supreme joy of seeing him play. And he could not play. Could not play because of his self-inflicted injury. And if Old Cunny's finances remained what they had been, this was Old Cunny's only and last chance to see tennis matches of Davis Cup caliber.

Jerry screwed his sick courage up to its highest pitch, and, trying to smile, he told Old Cunny of the mishap which had befallen him when he had got up to get a drink of water in the dark — the mishap which was to be kept a secret and which Old Cunny must also keep a secret. He told the story hesitantly, stammeringly; telling his lie to Old Cunny, who had never seen him play and who had journeyed all this distance to see him play, was somehow a very different matter from telling it to Garry Weston and Uncle Billy.

Old Cunny went pale as he received the news. But he, too, was a champion, even though he had lacked certain high gifts of

muscle and nerves and their coördination. He was dazed; was silent for several moments. And then, like Tommie, his foremost thought was not for himself, but for Jerry. He was all dismay and poignant sympathy for what this disaster must mean to Jerry.

'Put out of the matches by a little thing like that!' slowly breathed the appalled Old Cunny. 'Great God, Jerry — you not to play in the biggest of all matches! I know the disappointment you're suffering, boy, even though you're trying to hide it with a smile! It's just like your grit and gameness, Jerry, to have a terrible thing like this happen to you — and then keep right on smiling. But — oh, God!'

In his admiration for the nervy way Jerry was bearing his bitter disappointment, in his great sympathy and understanding — and also in resentment against such a misfortune befalling Jerry — Old Cunny gripped Jerry's hand fiercely and he blinked the tears out of his eyes.

This almost completely finished what was left of Jerry's control.

To try to make up to Old Cunny for what he had lost, Jerry at once arranged so that Old Cunny was thrown into the company of Uncle Billy and Garry Weston and the other chief promoters of the matches, and of course into the company of Tommie and the other players. Uncle Billy and Garry Weston took Old Cunny right to their hearts: not only because of what they knew he had done for the great Jerry, but because of his own self; rather dimly they remembered him as an almost-star of some twenty years back, master of technique and tactics and strategy, who had suddenly vanished from the world of the great tournaments. They pinned an umpire's badge on him; made him assistant of this and that; made as much of him as they could. Old Cunny liked all this attention; joyed in his return, thus honored, to the scenes which had thrilled his youth — only now the scenes were more brilliant, and on a greater scale.

But Jerry could see that this happiness of Old Cunny was only a surface happiness. Beneath his quiet smiles Jerry knew was bitterest disappointment that he was not to see his Jerry play, and greater than his personal disappointment was a poignant sympathy for what Jerry was suffering at being kept out of the matches. In the quiet ways that were a part of Old Cunny's personality, he was all the time doing little things which silently expressed his sympathy for Jerry's loss and Jerry's suffering — the suffering which Jerry was so bravely trying to conceal.

On the day before the opening of the matches announcement was made of Jerry's seizure and the fact that Cameron was to play in his stead on the morrow. There also appeared the silver-lining semi-official interview about the chance to season new stars along the lines Garry Weston had suggested.

The afternoon of the first matches, Jerry, wearing old and specially stretched shoes to accommodate his bandaged foot, sat on the clubhouse porch, Old Cunny on one side

and 'Lizabeth on the other. As an alleged weak man perhaps he should not have shown himself, but he had been unable to keep away from the courts. This was the first time Jerry had seen 'Lizabeth since his injury. She, of course, knew nothing of the truth; not even the forged truths her father knew; and Jerry did not limp, and his old, large, soft shoes betrayed nothing.

'Jerry,' she began indignantly the moment she saw him, 'you're not pale the least bit and you don't look the least bit sick!'

'I guess I just don't show it, 'Lizabeth.'

'What's more, I don't believe a word about this indigestion story! You sick just before a big match — you who've never been sick a day in your life! Nonsense!'

Jerry had himself seen this same weakness in the explanation when it had first been suggested.

'The other reason, the reason given in that interview, is the real reason they're not playing you!' she cried hotly. She was talking as loudly as she could; the angered

'Lizabeth wished every one who could hear to know exactly what she thought. 'And every one else believes that interview is the real explanation — they're keeping you out to give Arthur Cameron experience for future Cup matches! Dad — all of them — oh, what a pack of fools!'

'Now, 'Lizabeth,' put in Jerry, 'as for that point, you know they really have got to plan ahead for the Davis Cup matches of years to come.'

'Don't you try to defend them, Jerry, for putting you out! And don't talk such rot to me! Don't they realize that what this big tennis crowd bought their tickets for, what they wanted most of all, was to see Jerry MacAllister play! Isn't that so, Mr. Cunningham?'

Old Cunny, very truthfully, agreed with her. He gave no hint that he knew the secret motives of her father and the others.

'This crowd is sore, and they've got a right to be!' 'Lizabeth raged on. 'I've heard a lot of the talk and I can tell you it's

not nice talk. They believe just what I've told you. If ever a committee pulled a bone, it was pulled by Dad and his old committee! Keeping Jerry out and playing Arthur Cameron — how this crowd does love them for that!'

There was no doubt that the general belief was just as 'Lizabeth had stated it and there was no doubting the resentment of the huge crowd in the stands. If ever a cup committee had made itself suddenly unpopular, that committee was Uncle Billy and his fellows.

'Of course I don't want America to lose out,' 'Lizabeth went on, 'but I do hope that somehow something will happen that will show Dad and his old committee what fools they've made of themselves — something that'll make them sick of themselves and sorry forever after. And you, Jerry — it's an awful thing they've done to you! Perfectly awful!'

Thus 'Lizabeth raged on till Tommie and Holden took the court for the first match of

the series. Jerry, inwardly writhing, continued to defend the committee against 'Lizabeth's attacks. She hotly told him that, though he was taking it like a good sport, he was altogether too forgiving. He was a generous, quixotic fool, that's what he was!

In that first match the brilliant, reliable Tommie did what was expected of him. The match was hard, fast tennis; and though Tommie's swift energy took him everywhere, and he slashed the ball furiously, he won in four sets with plenty in reserve. He was given a great hand as he left the court, for next to Jerry the crowd loved Tommie.

'Fine playing, Tommie!' cried 'Lizabeth when he came up to them. 'But just your regular game — and I knew you'd win!'

'You were right there all the time, Tommie, with all your old stuff!' Jerry said, as he caught his friend's hand. 'And you'll do the same day after to-morrow against Allerton!'

'I sure hope to, old son. But Allerton is a tougher proposition than Holden.'

'Sure he is. But all you've got to do is to let out another notch or two. The match is yours, all right.'

Tommie nodded with that confidence which comes, not from egotism, but from proved ability. He pushed through the crowd on the porch which slapped his back and held out hands in congratulation, and on up to the showers. A few minutes later the match between young Cameron and the great Allerton was under way.

Cameron played surpassing tennis the greater part of the first set, leading at five to three. Then he broke and went all to pieces, and thereafter was a toy before the big Antipodean. 'Lizabeth again was raving, not against Cameron, but against her father and the committee. If only those old stupids had let Jerry play!

As far as results went, Jerry was satisfied. The matches of the day had turned out exactly as he had figured. Tommie had won to-day; to-morrow Moore and Singleton would win the doubles; on the third day

Tommie would defeat Allerton. Three victories — enough. And all certain victories. In addition, Cameron might win against Holden; he had the ability; of course it was too much to expect of Cameron to have won against an older player of Allerton's caliber and experience.

The second day 'Lizabeth was again beside Jerry on the clubhouse porch; and on her other side sat Tommie instead of Old Cunny, for Old Cunny had taken a line for the doubles match and had also promised to be a linesman in the match the third day between Tommie and Allerton. On this second day, as on the first, 'Lizabeth raved against the 'old committee' and poured sympathy upon Jerry as the victim of the old committee's stupidity.

Once more Jerry's calculation was proved correct. The polished team-work of Moore and Singleton was too much for the individually greater playing ability of Allerton and Holden. Two matches won. All that was now needed was Tommie's victory over

Allerton on the morrow, and that victory was certain. And by way of added security, Cameron had at least a fifty-fifty chance of beating Holden.

That night Tommie and Jerry before they went to bed — there were twin beds in their room — once more went over the possibilities of the morrow's matches. Tommie was quietly confident and slipped easily into sleep by ten o'clock. But Jerry remained awake an hour longer comforting himself with the certainty of his calculations.

CHAPTER IX

ANOTHER FLAW

And then Bobbie Burns stepped out of his Ayrshire grave with still further proof that his old saying about best-laid plans was no mere empty cynical arrangement of words. And the evidence was adduced in this wise, and was as follows:

In the middle of the night Jerry was awakened by a stifled groaning, and then a tense whistling intake of breath. He switched on the light at the head of his bed and looked across at Tommie. Tommie was all drawn up, his face was strained and beaded with perspiration, and there was agony in his eyes.

'Tommie — what's the matter?' Jerry cried.

'Some garage man — left his monkey-wrench — inside my works,' gasped Tommie, 'and it's trying to twist my gizzard out. Must be something I ate.'

Jerry did not need a second glance to tell him that something was seriously wrong. The next moment he was at the telephone barking for the house physician, and the moment after he was across the corridor pounding on Garry Weston's door. By the time he had dragged Garry Weston up from the deep slumber of wearied fifty, and had dragged him across the corridor, the house physician was also entering Jerry's door. A few rapid questions to Tommie by the physician, a quick examination, and from the lips of the doctor came the words that are feared by all athletes during the hot days of summer when they are compelled to travel from place to place and eat all kinds of cooking:

'Ptomaine poisoning.'

At the verdict Garry Weston was at the telephone shouting to Uncle Billy, who during the matches was lodging at a near-by hotel, to come at once; and then Garry Weston was shouting the same command to a doctor friend who lived but a few blocks

away. In an incredibly short time Uncle Billy and the second physician appeared, and the two doctors joined their skill.

During one of the gasping intervals between paroxysms, Tommie asked anxiously, still thinking of the game before himself:

'How about it, Doctor? Can you untwist me so I can play to-morrow?'

'Lord, no! You're in no danger; we got to you in time; you may be as good as ever in a few days. But to-morrow you'll be lucky if you have the strength to stand alone on your two feet.'

'Oh!' groaned Tommie, and turned over on his face.

All that could be done here, these doctors were doing. But there was something to be done elsewhere.

'Come over to my room,' said Garry Weston. 'We've got to have a chin-chin, and have it quick.'

Jerry and Uncle Billy followed Garry Weston across the hall. Garry Weston closed his door and stared tragically at the

two. It was Uncle Billy who gave words to the situation.

'Of all the hellish luck!' he said in an explosive groan. 'First we lose Jerry, then we lose Tommie! Our two aces! A week ago and we thought we had all five matches on ice! And now, it's what the devil are we going to do?'

Garry Weston nodded. 'Exactly. Who're we going to put in to play in Tommie's place? That's what we've got to settle!'

'Cameron and Holden play the first match to-morrow,' suggested Jerry, 'and if Cameron wins his match, we'll be all safe.'

'Cameron ought to win, but will he?' demanded Uncle Billy. 'You saw how he skidded yesterday. We can't count on him winning. We've got to have somebody to play Allerton. No use putting Moore or Singleton in. Either would play his best game, but against Allerton he'd be beaten before the start.'

Uncle Billy and Garry Weston fixed their

eyes on Jerry. Again it was Uncle Billy who spoke the thought of both.

'You see the hell of a hole we're in, Jerry. What's your doctor say about that foot of yours?'

'He says it's getting on fine,' lied Jerry.

As a matter of fact, that left foot had begun to trouble him severely during the previous afternoon, and at the present moment there was a throbbing ache in it; but nothing more, he considered, than that which usually accompanies the healing of an awkward wound. He read what was in the minds of the two men, and did not wait for it to become a spoken request.

'Of course, I'm willing to take on Tommie's match with Allerton — that is, if you want to put me in.'

'You're the only man we can put in, Jerry, and have a chance to take the match,' said Uncle Billy. 'Of course, if Cameron does come through and win, then that will make a different situation. We may then default your match, if we want to; but we'll

have to leave that till we see what Cameron does. Just now, Jerry, it looks to me as though America's keeping the Cup was likely to be put right up to you.'

'I'll try to do my best,' said Jerry, trying to reassure them by looking at perfect ease.

'Your best, if you can manage with your game foot, will be plenty good enough,' declared Uncle Billy.

The three filed back into Jerry's room. Jerry knew that Tommie's greatest illness just then was over the match he couldn't play; and of this illness from responsibility Jerry wished to relieve him.

'Tommie,' Jerry said cheerily, 'these two members of the tennis cabinet have just decided to make a mess of things. They're putting me in to sub for you against Allerton.'

'Good!' exclaimed Tommie, his pale, drawn face suddenly brightening. And then anxiously: 'But how about your foot?'

'Getting on better than the doctor expected. In fact, it's almost as good as ever.'

'Then the match is ours, and I don't give a hoot about this old ptomaine!' cried Tommie. 'And I don't care what you two doctors think, say, or try to do — I'm going out to see that match if I have to go on a stretcher!'

Jerry slept that night across in Garry Weston's suite, so that the sleep which was to refresh him for his great fight of the morrow might not be disturbed by any movement of the doctors and the nurse who were attending Tommie. But Jerry slept very little. He lay very quiet, thinking miserably of his great plan, and how it had come out; how he, to save himself, had deceived his friends, every one, and jeopardized America's chances. And his foot, which up till now had not seriously worried him, began to worry him a lot. Somehow — well — somehow that foot was feeling far from right.

The next morning, when locked in his own bathroom he was giving the foot the dressing which was regularly applied by his mythical doctor, Jerry closely inspected the foot.

There was greater pain in it — feverish, throbbing pain; it was very sore when he cautiously rested the ball upon the floor; and it was inflamed and dully reddish with a purple tinge beginning to appear.

A sudden fear gripped him. Perhaps in his anatomical ignorance he had partially severed a tendon. Under the terrific strain of a fiercely contested match, such a tendon might snap, and he would be helpless, hamstrung, and the match would be lost. He knew that severed tendons could be spliced and might in time be as strong as ever. Personally he was running no serious risk. But if that tendon snapped, then America — America that he had brought to such a crisis —

That tendon must not snap! He saw that his opponents were two: Allerton and that tendon. He must play both opponents with utmost skill, must let neither beat him.

He began to plan the strategy of his play, should he be called upon to play. He must play almost entirely with the head. With

the racquet, of course. But with the feet — his wonderful feet — as little as possible.

His game of the morrow was to be different from any the world had ever seen him play. And the big crowd would not understand why he played in such a manner; not even 'Lizabeth. For there was that pact of silence about his injury.

CHAPTER X

JERRY GOES FORTH TO BATTLE

WHILE Jerry planned the strategy of his game, should he be called upon to play, he was throughout the morning hoping with all his being for Cameron to win his match. Victory for Cameron — and Cameron certainly had the mechanical playing ability to win — meant American triumph and his own release from responsibility. Then should the committee decide to play him, the outcome would have no bearing upon the Cup matches. He would not mind personal defeat, and it would not then matter if that tendon did snap on him.

Afternoon came. Whether he played or not, he had to be dressed for playing. Here arose another problem. He could not have the usual locker-room circle of admirers around him when he dressed for his match and undressed after it; they would spot his

bad foot, in their natural solicitude insist upon examination, and this might lead to discovery of the truth. Besides, in the publicity of the locker-room he dared not give his foot the attention he desired. So, dropping a casual remark about needing quiet for the sake of his nerves, he took a room over at the Forest Hills Inn, a hundred yards from the courts.

Secure behind his locked door Jerry changed his clothes while the crowd was pouring into the West Side grounds before the first match. He undid his bandages and looked over his left foot. It seemed more red, more purple, and much sorer than in the morning, and it was now decidedly puffy. He carefully dressed the foot again. The large old tennis shoe, when he finally got his foot into it, was infernally tight, but there was no safe remedy for that.

Jerry appeared upon the clubhouse porch just as Cameron and Holden were coming out for their match. He slipped an arm through his team-mate's.

'Just look on this as an ordinary match, Cammie,' Jerry said easily. 'Just play a game as good as you've played against me many's the time — just hold on to your game, and if things seem to be breaking bad just remember that things break bad in streaks for everybody, and you just keep right on playing your game — and you'll win, Cammie! You'll win, sure!'

It was the kind of speech that usually helps steady nerves, instills confidence and courage. The youngster, obviously under a strain, nodded his head and forced a grateful smile.

'Thanks, Jerry, old man — I'll remember,' he said, and continued his way out upon the courts.

Jerry moved over to where, as she had promised, a seat was being held for him by 'Lizabeth. Old Cunny was with her, and also Tommie, the latter looking peaked and white and very weak. 'Lizabeth greeted Jerry with a radiant look that was frank in its exultation.

'Jerry — they've had to let you play after all!' she exclaimed. 'I can't tell you how glad I am! It's too bad about Tommie here — you know, Tommie, I do really feel awfully bad about you — but since Tommie had to get sick, it's all a mighty good lesson to Dad and the others! The idea! — their trying to run a series like this and leave *you* out!'

Jerry again tried to defend the action of the committee. But again 'Lizabeth would have none of this.

'Don't be foolish in your loyalty to that committee!' she interrupted him. 'You know in your heart that I'm right. And look over this crowd — it feels exactly as I do!'

There could be no doubt in Jerry's mind about the feelings of the fifteen thousand in the stands. The early editions of the afternoon papers had carried the news of Tommie's illness and Jerry's substitution for him. They were sorry for Tommie, just as was 'Lizabeth. But greater than their sorrow was their jubilant satisfaction.

'See how happy the crowd is!' continued 'Lizabeth. 'They're going to see you play! And they know the Cup is safe! And they're tickled at what's happened to that stupid committee — being forced to play you against its wishes!'

She raved on against the committee, as on the two preceding afternoons; and the more she raved, the quieter Jerry became. The committee was coming in for universal criticism these days; this was another item of the situation Jerry had brought on which he had not foreseen, and the injustice of it, with himself alone to blame, made Jerry's soul writhe.

There came a hush in 'Lizabeth's denunciations, for play had been called in the match between Cameron and Holden. In the last year and more Jerry had prayed hard for Tommie to beat him. No less hard did he now pray for Cameron to win and thus render his own playing purposeless. Cameron got away to a brilliant start, playing his flashiest, and took a hard-fought first

set. Jerry's feverish hope ran high. Then Cameron broke before the other's steadiness and began to go to pieces.

Tommie leaned close to Jerry and whispered his verdict, a true verdict, upon Cameron.

'That boy's got everything. He's a wonder when nothing's at stake — say in an exhibition match. But he's not there when you need him. He'll never do.'

Jerry nodded, only half hearing. Forty minutes later and Cameron was on his way to the clubhouse, a badly beaten youth.

Jerry tried not to show what that defeat meant to him. His exterior was exactly the Jerry his hundreds of friends and thousands of admirers knew so well; but within he was grim dismay. It had come, what he had feared — come after all. Two matches each: everything depending on his match. And to stave off an American defeat, the imminence of which he felt he had brought on, there was only a most painful foot, a most uncertain tendon. In all this great crowd

hardly more than half a dozen knew of his injury; and of these few only he himself had any idea of how hampering, if not serious, the injury might really be. All the fifteen thousand others were most confident. The great Jerry MacAllister, their idol, had never failed them. He would not fail them now.

Out on the court the umpire had mounted his lofty throne, and the fourteen linesmen were taking their chairs, Old Cunny and Uncle Billy among them. The time had come for the fifth and deciding match.

Jerry rose and 'Lizabeth rose with him. Her hand closed on his firmly. There was excitement and high confidence in her fine blue eyes.

'I don't need to wish you luck, Jerry,' she said. 'You don't need luck. All you need is just your regular dependable Jerry game. That'll show up the old committee! That'll win for us. And, oh, Jerry, I'm so — so glad' — here her exultant voice sank to a choking whisper — 'so glad that it's *you* who are going to save the Cup for us!'

Jerry, though her spontaneous speech stirred in him far different emotions, tried to give her back a warm, thanking, undisturbed, undisturbing look.

'Don't you forget, 'Lizabeth, that Allerton will be out there playing, too,' he said. 'And Allerton is one of the very best that has ever walked the courts. Isn't that so, Tommie?'

But 'Lizabeth gave Tommie no chance for comment. 'I don't care how good Allerton is — he can never beat you! Never!' And then again: 'Never! I tell you never!'

He still managed to keep his easy, smiling look as he once more thanked her and turned from her. Tommie caught his arm and drew him down till his ear was against Tommie's lips: for Tommie, who knew the truth, or part of the truth, had no illusion about Jerry needing all the luck that good wishes could bring him.

'Here's wishing you luck — the breaks when you need them,' he whispered. 'Be as easy on the bum foot as you can. And, Jerry

— it's mighty game of you, in the shape you're in — it's mighty game of you to go out there and take on my job for me with this crowd not guessing anything's wrong with you!'

Jerry joined Allerton and they moved off the porch together. They were great admirers of each other, these two. They had first met in 'eighteen in Paris, both then no more than boys — had in fact met in Paris several times when their leaves from the front had coincided and over café tables these two young allies in war had eagerly talked tennis as a relief from that grimmer game to the northward where more deadly balls were being volleyed back and forth. They had the high honor for each other that one sportsman, playing the game for the sake of the game, instinctively gives to another sportsman whom he recognizes as being of his own breed.

As Jerry, three racquets under his left arm, in that old familiar red sweater of his, stepped out in sight upon the green turf, the

three stands rose as one person in a riot of acclamation. Allerton, not jealous in the least, dropped a pace behind, as in the theater when another player moves aside to let the favorite take the audience's applause. With no sign of a limp, though every step was a separate agony, Jerry moved on toward the appointed court, flashing his magnetic unspoiled smile in acknowledgment, now toward this stand, now toward that.

That crowd could not have been more relieved, more jubilant. They were about to see their idol play. The Cup was safe.

On the court, after the peeling-off of sweaters, there was the usual business of posing while press cameras clicked at the two contestants. And then there was the usual warming-up. In this batting back and forth of balls Jerry kept almost in one spot behind the center of his baseline, returning the balls which came within easy reach of his racquet, and ignoring all others. This procedure held no hint to the crowd; such pro-

cedure is on the whole rather ordinary, for the purpose of such warming-up is not to return difficult shots, but to limber one's muscles and get one's strokes in working order. And there was no hint to the crowd in the fact that, in this preliminary work, Allerton took the net for several minutes and Jerry fed him balls, and that Allerton sent over a dozen or so of practice services, while Jerry took his turn at neither.

And then the match was on.

There have been many thrilling struggles upon the championship courts of the West Side Tennis Club, from that famous match with its seventeen-to-fifteen first set which McLoughlin took from the mighty Brookes in 'fourteen, on down through the years. But none of them — not one — produced tennis quite like Jerry's and Allerton's either in the actual playing, or in what happened after play was done.

Jerry won the toss, and chose the service. The great crowd, tense, expectant, leaned forward in their seats, knowing exactly

what they were about to see, for they knew their Jerry. His slim, lithe body would swing upward upon the ball, upon the very toes of his left foot, his racquet would flash over in an arc of his highest and farthest reach, and across the net would go his rifle service whose terrific speed gave his opponent no time to stir from his tracks — or his American twist that sharply broke high and far over to his opponent's backhand — or his version of the ordinary forehand service which sped over and nicked the right-hand corner of his opponent's court and then with a sharp break shot off to the right: the three chief services which comprised the famous 'MacAllister service,' the greatest service in the world. Allerton knew Jerry as well as did the public, and he expected what the public expected; and so he stood a good eight feet behind his own baseline to receive Jerry's tremendous shots.

Then came the first surprise of that surprising afternoon. Standing flat-footed just behind his baseline, with little movement

except of waist and shoulders and arms, Jerry sent over a sharp chop service that skimmed the net, skidded in Allerton's court without rising a foot from the ground and dropped in its second bound before Allerton could get forward to reach it. A puny shot — but a service ace.

Allerton grinned in appreciation. 'Clever work, Jerry!' he called over the net. 'That's using your head!'

The crowd applauded with delight at this first point won by their champion. That was tennis generalship for you! — that was doing the unexpected! That was mixing 'em up! Jerry was all there!

Again Allerton poised eight feet behind his baseline awaiting the famous MacAllister service, and again the great crowd expected to see that terrific service go crashing over. And again, instead, over went that same chop service that skidded and caught Allerton far out of position.

Again the crowd applauded. Two service aces right off the reel! And aces won by an

ordinary service like that! Just wait till Jerry began to send over the big ones!

Allerton, grinning good-naturedly at the way he had been tricked, and believing as the crowd believed, moved warily forward and stood on his baseline for the third service. The crowd chuckled appreciatively. Once more Jerry had shown court generalship; he had drawn Allerton into a position in which the latter could not possibly handle his bullet service. This time it would be the bullet service, most likely flicking the center line, with Allerton lunging vainly after it had flashed past him.

But once again over went that low bounding service. The crowd was astounded at Jerry's creating an opportunity and then ignoring it. Allerton was instantly on the ball, there was a sharp back-court exchange, and the point was Allerton's.

Unperturbed, smiling, Jerry went right ahead with that chop service which put the minimum of strain upon his left foot. Those first two service aces were the only aces he

secured with that service. And unperturbed, smiling, giving no sign of the pain that seared the left foot, Jerry stuck to his baseline in the play that followed. The crowd grew more and more puzzled as they watched these two stars. They were fundamentally net-players, both of them; using service and ground-strokes primarily to create openings which would enable them to gain the net and there finish off the point. And here these two net-players were settling down to a back-court duel. The crowd could not understand the thing — especially it could not understand Jerry, who seemed to be taking things so easily, not half exerting himself — and this in the deciding match of a Davis Cup series!

But if the crowd was bewildered by Jerry's playing, Allerton was no less puzzled. He knew well the tennis of which Jerry was capable; he knew Jerry a master of all court strategy; and he feared a trick, a trap in Jerry's method. Jerry undoubtedly had a card up his sleeve. Jerry's sticking to his

baseline was such an obvious lure to draw Allerton to the net, where Jerry would spring this unknown thing upon him, that Allerton decided against being duped into this position where Jerry wished him and remained in his back-court.

That back-court duel was not the spectacle the crowd had expected, but the crowd had to admit that it was wonderful playing of its sort. How magnificent, how near a masterpiece that first set was on Jerry's part the crowd did not know until long after the match was ended. Tennis crowds are infinitely more fair-minded than baseball crowds; but even so, there were many in the stands who found caustic fault with the idolized Jerry that afternoon. He was simply 'grandstanding!' He was trying to 'show up' Allerton, 'make a monkey of him,' by trying to beat him with a second-rate game, a kid's game! Why the dickens didn't Jerry play his game?

Of course Jerry, all that multitude thinking the contrary, was playing his game:

exactly the game he had planned — a game, painful though it was, that would least endanger that treacherous tendon — a game that would not reveal his weakness to his opponent, nor reveal it to the audience and thereby gain their sympathy which Jerry felt he did not deserve. In the game he was now playing, Jerry was using all the skill which was his by birthright and which training and unceasing practice had brought as near to perfection as is possible with human materials. He had those two qualities, which in a great baseball pitcher count for more than speed and curves; he had control to its finest degree, and he had the ability to mask what he was about to deliver. Of course, unlike the great pitcher who tries to throw all balls with the identical motion, Jerry's strokes, not counting the stabbing strokes when close in on the net, fell into three very different divisions: forehand, backhand, overhead; but within each of these divisions his various strokes were executed with what seemed exact similarity.

Off the forehand, for instance, what seemed the same motion produced a drive of whistling speed, a heavily topped drive, a chop drive, a sliced drive that shot off to the opponent's left, a floater that barely crossed the net and dropped dead on the other side, a lob that was short or long as Jerry willed — the direction of all a mystery to the opponent until the ball's flight had begun.

All this wizardry of strokes Jerry now used against Allerton. He had need of it all, for Allerton was a splendid back-court player himself and a wonder at covering ground. Every ball Jerry got his racquet cleanly on went back with rifle speed for a clean placement or a forced error, or went back with some trick concealed in it. Jerry did not try to cover too much court. Balls that fell just over the net in his fore-court he made no effort to get and when balls shaved his sidelines he merely stood in his tracks and called out, 'Nice shooting!' His movements were so easy, so effortless, his face was always so pleasant and confident,

that it seemed that he was giving these points to Allerton and giving them willingly. It seemed as if he felt that he did not really have to exert himself to win. That is what the crowd thought, and also what Allerton thought.

Back and forth, back and forth, went the ball in long-drawn-out back-court rallies during that first set. The set consumed more time and more energy than the score might indicate. Finally it went to Jerry at seven to five.

Jerry was sure that not once had his face or any bodily movement betrayed the secret of his foot.

There was applause, but rather mild applause, from the great gay-colored stands. Jerry had taken the set all right. But this wasn't what they had come to see. Why in Heaven didn't Jerry play his game?

CHAPTER XI

HIS BACK TO THE WALL

As the opponents, in changing sides, paused a moment at the umpire's chair to towel dripping faces and take a sip of water, Allerton said heartily:

'Grand back-court game you've got, Jerry! You were certainly stroking that ball!'

'Didn't have much on you, old sport,' replied Jerry.

Apparently entirely at ease, all confidence, Jerry took his stand to start service in the second set. But for all his outer ease, within he was intensest concern and suspense. He had played and won that first set exactly as he had planned — his kind of game for that one match — the minimum of strain upon the left foot. If he could only keep Allerton playing this baseline game, why, then —!

But Allerton was not kept at the baseline game. From the very beginning of that second set, the play changed its character.

Allerton knew that some clever trick was behind the kind of game Jerry had been playing. So great an all-around player, so great a court strategist as Jerry, would not hold back the fire of his big game, obviously would not so limit his actions at the beginning of the fray, unless some masterful plan was behind this procedure. All during the first set Allerton had tried every back-court device he knew, without being drawn into the trap set for him at the net, to uncover Jerry's hidden purpose. But all his experimenting had revealed nothing; the trick was still successfully concealed. Only one way remained to discover Jerry's trick, and the mystery of that hidden trick had to be solved; this was to walk deliberately into the trap, and discover the trick by having the trap sprung upon him. After that, he would know how to meet it.

With this as his motive, from the very

start of the second set Allerton began to rush the net, expecting anything and everything that might be surprising. To his utter bewilderment, nothing new or unexpected happened. Jerry remained in the back of his court, shooting them over just as before.

Allerton felt he still had not discovered the mystery. Undoubtedly the mystery was there, just waiting its time to trap him.

But he continued rushing to the net on every opening, still alert for the sudden discharge against him of that puzzling mystery. The crowd now beheld the spectacle of a great net game against a great back-court game.

As in the first set, Jerry made no attempt to return balls that did not come within comparatively easy reach. The sharp-angled volleys from the net position that cut the sidelines within his service court, the crafty chops that fell dead just over the net, the flashing balls that got the corners of deep back-court — all these he let go by him, calling as each such point was scored, 'Nice

shot!' But the balls Jerry's racquet did get, forehand or backhand, went sizzling down the sidelines just out of Allerton's lurching reach, or went over with a heavy top that shot them down at the shoe-laces of the inrushing Allerton, or went over in high lobs that dropped a foot within Allerton's baseline, and kept the Australian running, or low lobs that just cleared the high swing of Allerton's racquet when Allerton was at the net.

It was magnificent baseline tennis. But when a great baseline game meets a great net game in modern tennis, there can be but one result, especially when the great baseline game is apparently taking things rather easily and is not even trying for the difficult returns. It was hard tennis, fast tennis, except for the balls Jerry seemed purposely to let go. The second set went to Allerton at seven to five.

The crowd applauded Allerton, but not with full spontaneous volume. Undeniably he had won the set, but he had not won against Jerry at his best, not against their

real Jerry. But why didn't Jerry wake up? Didn't he realize that the championship of the nations, the honor of American tennis, depended upon his racquet? This was no time for practicing strokes — for fooling, and smiling while he fooled. Why didn't he play the game?

There was no booing, as there might have been in a great baseball crowd. But Jerry sensed what the stands were saying in hushed voices. Save for the six or eight who knew the secret — and even they did not know all the secret — all these thousands were finding fault with him, their idol; were bewildered by their idol's playing, by his nonchalance. He sensed that even 'Lizabeth, on the clubhouse porch, was criticizing him in her heart.

But Jerry did not change his style, nor his easy, smiling demeanor. The third set proceeded along the tactics of the second. But there developed a difference. Allerton saw that, whatever the mystery Jerry was holding in reserve, he was now outplaying Jerry.

The thought of beating the great unbeatable Jerry grew, as the set progressed, to be a thrilling possibility — a thrilling probability: and from that stimulus there followed that not uncommon phenomenon, largely psychological, of a great man rising above his greatest. Jerry played no worse. But across the net was a super-Allerton. As Allerton himself later put it, 'I was playing 'way over my head.'

That third set went to Allerton at six to four.

The stands applauded Allerton as he walked to the clubhouse for the customary rest and the rubdown at the end of the third set. But it was mechanical applause and the crowd kept their seats in silent stupor, or talked among themselves in stupefied whispers. This thing they had just seen — it was unbelievable.

Jerry had dropped into a chair beside the umpire's stand, there to take his period of rest. He did not dare go into the clubhouse; if he did so, nothing he could say would pre-

vent friends from having him stripped and given the usual refreshing rubdown — and they would see his foot! And his shoe, once off, could not be again put on! Right here on the court, in public view, was his only safety. And there he sat, praising Allerton's great game, in his face and manner no hint of pain or disability — though that left foot was now burning and throbbing with an agony that was almost unbearable.

Uncle Billy and Old Cunny, who knew the reason for Jerry's poor showing — or thought they did — made themselves into walls that gave him privacy and shut off questioning and advice. Uncle Billy was pale; he was seeing America defeated and the Cup taken from her. But he knew that, with Tommie out of it with illness, there was no other player they could have put in who could have done so well as Jerry had been doing.

Old Cunny gazed on Jerry with affection, pride — and despair. He, too, knew that Jerry, under the circumstances, had been America's best entry — even though Jerry

was not proving enough. These two knew how game and magnificent Jerry's playing had been — or thought they did, for even they did not know how truly great it was — but they did not dare give Jerry the encouragement of the great praise they felt he deserved. To have done so would have necessitated their letting it be known that Jerry was playing under a handicap, and it was against the procedure they had decided upon to let this become public yet. So all Old Cunny could say was this:

'I've read a lot about your groundstrokes, Jerry, but till I saw them this afternoon I didn't believe there could be such strokes!'

The rest of it Old Cunny said with his eyes. And Uncle Billy had to limit his real feelings to the same method of silent communication.

Through the little group of officials that surrounded Jerry, 'Lizabeth pushed her way, the weak Tommie at her side and holding her arm. No order from officials, on such an

occasion, could keep 'Lizabeth back. Jerry rose easily from his chair smiling that pleasant, unchanging smile which had grown to be irritating, indeed almost hateful, to fifteen thousand people.

'Jerry, what's the matter with you?' 'Lizabeth demanded sharply, hotly, almost accusingly. 'Why do you keep on with such fooling? It's clever, yes — but it's not winning tennis! Don't you know you're not just Jerry MacAllister playing for Jerry MacAllister? You're America, playing for America! One more set like this, and America will be —'

She did not finish her sentence. Her snapping it off into silence was the most effective finish she could have given it.

It was hard for Jerry to take 'Lizabeth's condemnation smiling, but he did.

'Perhaps I'm wrong, 'Lizabeth,' he said, 'but I figured that playing this kind of a game was my best chance to beat Allerton.'

'It's not, and it never will beat him!' she cried. 'Cut loose with your service — go to

the net — play your regular Jerry game! That's the only way to beat him! And for America's sake, go to it!'

She stood very straight as she gave this order, quivering slightly, her blue eyes flashing at him. He met her gaze, but he trembled at the accusation behind her sharp command. Tommie, however, stepped between the two and saved Jerry the difficulty of finding words with which to reply.

'Jerry's played more tennis than either of us, 'Lizabeth, and I guess Jerry knows better than we do how to play his man,' Tommie said quietingly. 'And now we'll have to be getting right back — they'll be clearing the court for the next set in a second. Just one little tip, Jerry, before we go.'

He pulled his mate's head down until his lips were at Jerry's ear. Those who saw the action thought Tommie was coaching his team-mate. What Tommie really whispered was this:

'You're playing great, old son — great! How in Heaven you're doing it I don't

know, with such a foot! Oh, but you're game, old son — I was never prouder of you!'

After that, Tommie and 'Lizabeth started back for the clubhouse. Two minutes later the fourth set was on.

Jerry had hoped desperately that the terrific pace at which Allerton had gone during the second and third sets would have drawn heavily upon the Australian's speed and endurance, and that against a tired and slower Allerton the craft of his back-court game might still prevail. Despite the sting in what 'Lizabeth had said and what he knew the huge crowd, formerly his worshipers, were thinking, Jerry did not dare change his game.

There was the pain, murderous enough as he had been playing, and which would rip him with a shriller agony if he put the strain of a greater effort upon the foot; that physical pain, however, he could bear. But if he should speed up his game, there was the almost certain consequence that the first added strain would snap the weakened

tendon, and with the snap of the tendon the match would be instantly gone.

No, his only chance was to play just as he had been playing, and hope for a slowed-down Allerton.

But from the start of the fourth set, Jerry saw that this last hope had been all in vain. Allerton had been bodily refreshed by his rest and rubdown; spiritually he had been stimulated by the glorious dream of beating the great Jerry — a thing he had not considered possible, though he had gone into the match to fight his hardest as he always fought. With this vision before him, Allerton became a whirlwind, a tornado — a tornado that had also accuracy and finesse. Never before had he played such tennis as in this fourth set — uplifted and magnified and his every ability inspired to do greater than its greatest by the nearing glory of taking for himself the high throne of world's champion. Great as was his usual game, he was now playing almost a full fifteen above his best.

Jerry's playing did not deteriorate. He was really playing as well as in that first set which he had won. But against such devastating brilliance, such will-to-conquer, what chance has a player with a back-court game? — and a player who at that really had only one leg, even though he has succeeded in making his opponent and the stands believe he had two?

Jerry did not crumple — not for one moment — but the fury and accuracy of the super-Allerton made it appear to the vast audience that he had crumpled, even as they had seen Cameron crumple. Down went Jerry — down. Within nine minutes Allerton was leading at three to nothing. He was making that set — the match set and the Cup set if he won it — a walk-away; and a walk-away against the supposedly unbeatable Jerry. Then by a series of marvelous placements along the sidelines Jerry took a game. But the next game Allerton went right through him and was leading four to one. And still Jerry held to the same tactics,

keeping behind the middle of his baseline, still desperately hoping, still fearing that tendon.

On the resistless Allerton swept. Now he led five to one. And then with Jerry serving, and still sending over that chop service which he had been using through all four sets, Allerton took the first point; then the second point. Game score, love thirty. Allerton's score five to one, thirty love, and needing only two more points. Two more points, and the set would be Allerton's, the match Allerton's, the Cup Australia's, and the title of world's champion rightfully if not technically Allerton's. Just two more points — and Allerton, the world's greatest tennis glory in his hands, was playing tennis that apparently could not be resisted or denied.

The huge crowd, while honoring the great Allerton, sat in sickened silence while they awaited the inevitable end. This fourth set had moved so swiftly that they could hardly realize this tragedy which they had wit-

nessed. Their great Jerry, their unbeatable Jerry, was being crushingly defeated, humiliatingly defeated. And worst of all, he was going down to defeat without putting forth his best efforts. And this humiliating defeat was not merely Jerry's personal defeat; it was their own; it was America's. A few more seconds now, a few short flights of the ball back and forth across the net, and all would be over.

It was just then, when all was admittedly lost, that the change came: that amazing change about which so much was made the following morning by all the daily papers of the world.

CHAPTER XII

HIS JERRY GAME

JUST what happened can be clearly stated. It was seen by the fifteen thousand in the stands, and all the visible external facts are now a part of tennis history, and can be looked up by those who desire every detail.

But that which caused this change — these facts and influences which did not get into the newspapers and which are not yet to be found in the records of tennis — these are not so easily stated. Many of them are elusive, indefinite, difficult to capture and present in a few clear sentences; even Jerry himself could not have told all his motives, or which weighed most with him. He was seized upon by a rush of motives, which in that moment of crisis had none an identity of its own.

Of course there was the obvious fact that in this last extremity, even if the weakened

tendon did snap, he could not be worse beaten than he was already beaten. Trying to save that tendon, and play the only game that seemed a possibly winning game — this was of no further avail. The tendon might just as well snap.

And then — and this influenced Jerry beyond any measuring — there was Old Cunny: Old Cunny, his discoverer, his tennis-master, whose poverty had never permitted him during all these years once to see his pupil play the real game which he had built upon his master's teachings and which all the world now applauded — who had spent his hard savings, his one brief holiday, to see his pupil play, and now, at last seeing him, was seeing him disgracefully beaten.

And then there was 'Lizabeth — how she had stung him — and the need of setting himself right with her if possible.

And then this great crowd — how it had depended on him — how America had depended on him. And then there was the great fact that his friends, this crowd,

America, were in this uttermost extremity because of just one reason; and that one reason was the fact that he, Jerry MacAllister, in order to escape from his personal predicament, had secretly inflicted upon himself a wound. His was the blame. All of it.

The great achievement of the human frame, when injured; the spirit soaring to heights and carrying its disabled habiliment of flesh with it: this is one of the oldest of stories — a story, however, which can never grow old. Here is the supreme might of the spirit: the spirit which, in non-miracles, gives the dead power to pick up his bed and walk.

Such was the sum of Jerry's blurred motives. And being what he was, such was Jerry's spirit.

After his second soft service, which brought him and his friends and America within two points of crushing defeat, Jerry paused the briefest instant before sending over his third service. It seemed natural to

the great crowd that a man should pause, at such a moment — should hesitate, shrink back from such a precipice before his final plunge. The crowd, heartsick and bitter, but now resigned, dully awaited the swift, inevitable conclusion. Across the net, four feet inside his baseline, alert to receive Jerry's monotonous, low-bounding service, Allerton waited, intent to bring to a quick finish the glorious victory which was his.

Not once during the four sets had Jerry's tactics, or manner, or appearance changed. And now without the slightest warning of change, that impotent flat-footed service was gone. Back the lithe body swayed, arched backward as far as balance would permit; then forward and up it swung upon the agonizing ball of his left foot, on up till it felt the added spring and power of muscular toes; and then the racquet whistled straight forward at its topmost arc. There was a singing *pang!* — as when a single piano key is struck fortissimo — and a flick of white on Allerton's center line, and Jerry's

rifle service was past him before Allerton could move from his tracks.

The crowd blinked and sat up sharply. Allerton, taken aback, fearing Jerry might send him over either that short-bounding service or a terrific service like the last, took a compromise stand upon his baseline. Again, that rifle service came over, not aimed at a corner that might possibly be out of Allerton's reach, but at the very center of Allerton's body. The blinding speed of the ball gave Allerton time to move to neither side, so that he might take the shot upon his forehand or backhand. He got his racquet on the ball, but so awkwardly that the ball angled sharply off and straight at 'Lizabeth on the clubhouse porch.

Thirty all. The startled crowd leaned forward, with the desperate hope of the millionth chance. Allerton, now knowing what he had to meet, moved far behind the baseline to the position taken by players who hoped to handle the MacAllister service, the greatest service in the world.

And the MacAllister service came over: that service which, through almost four sets, the great crowd had not seen till now: the rifle service, which flashed without cut to the bull's-eye of Jerry's intent; the forehand service, which broke swift and low far to the right; the American service, which broke high and far to the left: each under the perfect control of a master pitcher on the day he pitches his no-hit game.

But the great Allerton, greater than himself, victory almost his, was not dismayed. He got his racquet on all these tremendous services; of some he made magnificent returns. But Jerry was no longer merely a baseline player. No longer was he letting difficult shots go by him without the challenge of an effort. On every forced opening he was now making for the net, his racquet was everywhere.

Even in that first game of Jerry's reversal — the seventh game of the set — the crowd realized that it was seeing amazing tennis. It might not last more than this one game;

certainly, with Allerton having such a lead, and playing such a game, it could not last long. But so long as it should last, it was amazing.

Never before had two players faced each other with so much at stake and that stake dependent upon so slight a margin: the final match which was to determine the champion among the nations — which also might be considered as determining the individual championship of the world — and all this tremendous issue now narrowed down to a single game which a few strokes might decide. Allerton needed to win only one game to win everything, and he was determined to win it. Jerry needed to lose only one game to lose everything, and he was determined not to lose it.

The crowd saw how great was the issue that was now joined between these two; a vast determination pitted against a vast determination. And they saw that their Jerry was again their Jerry; was now playing what 'Lizabeth had styled his 'Jerry game.' And

then, as the strokes flashed on, it dawned upon them that they were not merely seeing their Jerry, the world's greatest. They were seeing a Jerry who was greater than Jerry. They were awed almost into silence by that which they were seeing.

And how Jerry did play! Psychologists tell us that in life's supremest crises, when the spirit is most nearly free from earthly or personal considerations, or in periods of unusual relaxation, we may become clairvoyant, clairaudient, may glimpse into the future. Perhaps Jerry's spirit may have had a brief gift of prescience; or something may have whispered to him that this was perhaps his swan song, and that while voice lasted he should sing his best. Be that as it may, Jerry never played better than he now played.

Allerton's shots to the far corners, his sharply angled cross-court shots, his undercut balls that fell just over the net, the cleverly placed lobs — all these shots that only swift and imperiling movement could recover and which Jerry had been allowing

to pass him — all such balls he now tried for, and got. It was marvelous racquet-work! Marvelous!

Racquet-work! Yes — but there was something said in the early portion of this history about a native gift and a trained gift that was fundamental to Jerry's amazing racquet-work — was perhaps even greater than his wizardry of racquet. Foot-work. For years his foot-work had been praised by the experts, and not praised too highly. But never before had Jerry's agile, intuitive, prescient feet risen to such glory. They were the feet of Mercury.

In the first three sets, and until the fourth set was lost except for two points, Jerry's head had refused his feet their opportunity to work, their chance for self-expression. It was now as if his feet were determined to make up for all that had been denied them. Wherever his racquet had need to be — at the outer corners of his service court, to pick up a sharply angled cross-court shot — at his sidelines, when he was at the net, to

intercept an accurate passing shot — all over the fore-court when the volleyed ball came at him in rapier flashes — high in the air when a lob attempted to sail over him — just there, in the needed spot, his inspired feet transported him so that he was ever in the position for his racquet to meet the ball. If the movement of the feet can ever be poetry — and the proponents of æsthetic dancing claim that it can be, and that the Pavlowas and the Nijinskys are wordless Sapphos and Shakespeares — then on that afternoon Jerry's feet rose to the very pinnacle of poetic expression and wrote a matchless and undying lyric.

Details and figures are not here needed. They are all to be found in the books where such statistics properly belong. All will recall that the game in which Jerry turned and made his stand, Jerry won. And he won the next, with Allerton fighting brilliantly and stubbornly like the great and gallant player that he was. And Jerry won the next. And the next. Games now five all. The crowd

began to see that Jerry, and America, had a real chance.

Jerry won that fourth set at eight to six. In its joy the crowd went wild. Two sets each, and if Jerry could maintain such playing America would be safe! Marvelous playing — marvelous!

But even in this hour of anticipatory jubilation there were many who again criticized Jerry's playing of the match, for no idol is so great that he is without his critics. He had been hippodroming — grandstanding; handing Allerton this apparently secure lead merely in order that he, Jerry, might flash a melodramatic finish. Great playing, of course — but theatrical. Wasn't that what the theatrical managers were talking so much about these days? — 'the play with the punch,' everything in the play being sacrificed for the punch, and then holding back the punch until the very end of the play? That was just the kind of a play Jerry was writing with his racquet this afternoon!

The people who thought this, and said this, were the people who felt most sick of themselves when they read their papers the following morning.

The pair went into the fifth and deciding set with the same fury and determination. With both men playing above themselves, it was bitterly fought throughout, and was much more close than the figures would indicate. But again, why go into details, when the details are all correctly set forth elsewhere? Allerton played with unfaltering skill and courage, but what chance had even an Allerton who was greater than Allerton against a Jerry who for a few climacteric moments was greater than Jerry? As all remember, Jerry took the fifth set at six to four.

It was only the reward that was justly due his feet that the winning point, the final touch in the great victory, should come because of the infallible magic of his foot-work. Jerry was in his favorite net position just within his service line, when Allerton sent

up a beautiful deep lob. Jerry's feet carried him to the exact spot beneath the dropping ball, lifted him in a Mercury's leap high into the air, and thus gave his racquet its chance. The racquet flashed in its arc — there was again that singing *pang!* as when a single piano key is struck fortissimo — the ball shot down into Allerton's court, spurted up a hundred feet into the air and soared over the grandstand.

The great crowd stood up and roared; pounded its hands and roared, shouting Jerry's name. Victory had been snatched from defeat! The Cup was still America's! Their king was still their king! Their Jerry was still their Jerry! And, yes — even a greater Jerry! For his play in those two last sets showed that his great play was mounting to even loftier heights. That play had been unbelievably great!

How very much greater even than they then believed Jerry's play had been in reality, these joyous thousands did not learn until the following morning. And then,

when they read their papers, many of these thousands could not keep back their tears.

For a moment Jerry stood in mid-back-court where his feet had uplifted him for his final shot. His face was toward one of the grandstands and to the cheering thousands he returned his magnetic smile: that smile which had not left him at any time during the struggle.

Toward him, as he stood there, the linesmen came rushing. And the big voice of Uncle Billy boomed out joyously:

'Jerry — Jerry! The world can't beat you! Oh, Jerry!'

Jerry heard. But he also heard a voice sound from the opposite direction, and it was toward this direction Jerry turned — Old Cunny's direction. Old Cunny's lined and drab face was illumined, transfigured, by a joy inexpressible. His was a look of one whose long years of waiting, of dreaming, of deprivation, of hard saving, have been exalted to a thousand times their highest expected worth.

'Oh, Jerry — Jerry!' he called while yet at a distance, a choke of sublime happiness in his voice. 'I'd read how great you are — but I never dreamed that there could be such tennis as you've just showed me!'

Jerry gave back his look with affection, admiration, gratitude: a look which plainly said, 'You did it all, Cunny.' Afterwards Old Cunny recalled that, even as Jerry had looked at him, his face had grown white and drawn. None then guessed how — the driving demands of a supreme necessity now over and the strain removed — the reaction had set in and Jerry's left leg was asserting its searing agony.

Suddenly the onrushing officials halted in their tracks and waited. Again had come that brief moment which tradition has made sacred to the vanquished and his victor. Around the net came running the big Australian, panting heavily, adrip with sweat. His face alight with genuine admiration, he advanced upon Jerry with hand outheld.

But before he could reach Jerry, Jerry was

not there to take that hand of warm congratulation. He was in a loose huddle upon the turf.

For the second time in his life Jerry had fainted upon a tennis court.

CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAIL'S END

When Jerry swam back to consciousness, from whatever far place he had been, he was stretched upon two joined tables in the common room of the clubhouse, and there was the burning taste of brandy in his throat and his head and face and neck were dripping with water.

But none of these was the first thing his consciousness seized upon. That first thing was the amazing fact that 'Lizabeth was holding him tight in her arms, was kissing him, and between her kisses was sobbing out:

'Oh, Jerry — it was awful what I said to you! Forgive me, Jerry! Please do! You were — you were — '

He slipped his right arm about her, drew her convulsively close to him, and, without a word of reply to her, he kissed her: the

first time he had ever kissed her. The agony was still in foot and leg, but with 'Lizabeth's lips against his it seemed less than nothing.

Then, holding her so, he noted that they two were not alone. Close beside him on his right stood Old Cunny, his face gray with anxiety and fear; and next Old Cunny was Uncle Billy, anxious and frightened; there was Garry Weston; and down near his feet stood the gallant Allerton, still in his wet tennis clothes, looking very grave and pale; and seated in a chair at his left was the weakened Tommie — good old Tommie — his thin, freckled face quivering with anxiety.

Then Jerry did again become conscious of that terrible agony in his left foot; then he felt a slashing of his shoe-laces, then of the shoe itself, and looking down in that direction he saw that the slasher was Dr. Anthony, a member of the West Side Club and a famous surgeon. He felt the shoe pulled off, and after the shoe his heavy woolen sock. And then he heard Dr. Anthony catch his breath and exclaim:

'Great God! Look at that foot, will you! Think of a man playing with such a foot — and think of a man playing such tennis as Jerry played those last two sets, and playing it with a foot like that!'

There was awe and amazement in the doctor's voice, and also a bit of horror. Jerry had caught the anxiety in the bearing of all, and now that everything was over and quite all right, except for the pain, he wanted to dispel their concern.

'Nothing to worry about, Doctor — just a tendon snapped on me,' he exclaimed cheerfully. 'You can splice that.'

And to the others Jerry explained apologetically: 'I knew I had that bad tendon, and that it might snap if I put too much strain on it. That's why I took things so easy the early part of the match. Lucky for me the tendon didn't snap till the match was over.'

'Snapped tendon!' almost shouted Dr. Anthony. 'This is no such sweet simple little thing as a snapped tendon! This is a fulminating infection!'

'Fulminating infection?' repeated Jerry. 'What's that mean in ordinary English?'

'Blood-poisoning! You must have had it before you went into that match, and had it bad. And your playing — particularly the way you played those last two sets — all that strain and twisting on the very center of infection — that set the thing to galloping.'

Dr. Anthony turned sharply on his friend, Garry Weston. 'Garry, get my hospital on the wire, quick. Tell them to rush an ambulance here. I want this foot on an operating-table inside an hour!'

Garry Weston vanished.

'Is it — is it dangerous, Doctor?' asked Uncle Billy.

'Dangerous!' cried Doctor Anthony. 'Hardly anything more dangerous — or swifter! I've seen men die inside of twenty-four hours from a less thing than this foot!'

And then he added consolingly, with vigorous determination as though committing himself to a promise: 'But I'll save

Jerry's life! And his leg! And his foot, too! That is, some kind of a foot.'

There was a moment of silence at this. Again it was Uncle Billy who first spoke.

'Some kind of a foot?' breathed Uncle Billy. 'His tennis, Doctor? Will it affect Jerry's tennis?'

'Jerry's tennis! Tennis with such a foot as Jerry's going to have!'

Then the famous surgeon, who had been brusquely snapping out his facts and orders like a general facing an unexpected attack, subsided into the simple, big-hearted man he was: a lover of tennis, an admirer of Jerry and Jerry's game. His big authoritative voice softened to a slow whisper.

'You and I — all of us — have just seen the last tennis Jerry will ever play.'

At that slow pronouncement, an appalled hush fell upon the little group. From without still sounded the joyous cheers of the great crowd for their Jerry — their unbeatable Jerry. Then each of the little group around Jerry reacted according to his nature.

The big Australian perhaps never remembered what he did; but his military training automatically expressed itself, and the gallant soldier of tennis courts and battlefields came erect and stood at salute as when pass the honored dead. Uncle Billy stood stricken, silent, all color gone from his ruddy face. The lined, gray face of Old Cunny held that sublime, unearthly agony of one who has helped beget a god, has for a few brief moments been granted the sight of his god in godlike action, and now is seeing his god in death. 'Lizabeth was clutching Jerry closer than ever, sobbing over this unbelievable disaster to the world, in agonizing sympathy with Jerry at this swift ending to so glorious a career. And weakened, nerve-shattered Tommie, old rival and old friend, now had his head on Jerry's left shoulder and, his control all gone, was brokenly crying there.

As the full meaning of Dr. Anthony's verdict came home to Jerry, he closed his eyes upon the unbearable agony of it.

Never to play again! Never to feel again that artist's thrill of full mastery of one's faculties and one's instrument! Never to feel again that splendid joy of give-and-take with a worthy and gallant opponent! Never again to hear the mighty applause of the great crowds — the crowds he loved, and who loved him! Never!

What Jerry suffered while his tennis self lay dying is beyond the limited power of mere words even to suggest.

And then, uncertainly and tremulously at first, another sensation began to press forward through this death agony. This sensation was born of, rather was the slow resurrection of, that idea which had been behind all his planning for this last year and more; that idea which had prompted him to cut himself even as chance had willed it that he should be cut by accident. That idea in its resurrected form — a form of which he previously had never, never dreamed — grew and grew and grew. He caught his breath at what his mind was seeing.

He heard Tommie choking out against his shoulder: 'Think of it — the greatest the world ever saw — coming to such a finish!'

Holding 'Lizabeth tight to him with his right arm, with his left Jerry gently pushed Tommie, who had fought him and shared with him, away so that he could look into his old friend's eyes. His left hand caught and held Tommie's left.

'It doesn't matter, Tommie — don't you see?' he whispered meaningly — 'don't you see?'

Tommie stared through his blinking tears at Jerry's face. In Jerry's face, though still dazed with loss, there was relief, even exultation, even the beginning of a very pale smile.

'My God!' breathed the next champion of the world, in awe, convulsively gripping the hand he held. 'My God!'

For the next champion of the world understood. He was seeing what Jerry was seeing. He caught his breath in a sharp gasp, in an inward exclamation.

So — Jerry was seeing this as his way out!

CHAPTER XIV

AFTERWARDS

Dr. Anthony was as nearly right as any doctor, however great, is likely to be when he has to make a quick diagnosis of so swift and deadly and treacherous a disease as blood-poisoning. Jerry never played tennis again. That is, not championship tennis; not what 'Lizabeth termed his 'Jerry tennis.'

But tennis of another variety Jerry does play. If you are around the West Side Tennis Club you can see him on one of the courts on Saturday half-holidays and on Wednesday afternoons; but on Wednesday afternoons not earlier than four-thirty. These few hours out of the week are all Jerry can possibly spare for tennis from business; and business takes most of his evenings as well.

After the operation, Jerry gave himself as one possessed to Uncle Billy's business; and

though but an amateur at business, he soon discovered that Uncle Billy's business was in a far worse way than he had once told Tommie. In fact, just a little longer and Uncle Billy would have had no business. There had been no dishonesty that Jerry could discover. What had happened was merely what is likely to happen to any business, however good, when its owner and responsible head gives his time and his energetic interest to other matters for some fifteen or twenty years, and leaves the management of his affairs to people whose chief concern in those affairs is likely to be their salaries.

Jerry did not repeat his discovery to Uncle Billy. He felt this would serve no useful purpose. Besides, he feels the business is rapidly on the mend and there is no need worrying Uncle Billy. Fundamentally the business is sound enough; what it has needed, and now needs, is not so much an expert — it has experts enough — as one who will be eternally on the job, watching everything,

accepting responsibilities. And this Jerry feels, and rightly feels, he is now doing.

When you do see Jerry on the tennis courts, you almost invariably see him in a match with Mrs. Jerry. For the stiff woman's game that 'Lizabeth plays is now just about Jerry's measure, with that left foot of his. For all ordinary purposes of life that left foot is adequate, but on the tennis court that stiff foot is only somewhat better than a clever, self-manipulating crutch.

Sometimes Jerry longs for the glorious game that once was his, for the worshiping applause of giant crowds — both now gone forever. But on the whole he is much happier than he had ever dreamed of being. For he has love; he has work that is a real man's work; he has friends. And that is far more than the lives of most people total.

He has just two worries. Both are secrets, except from Tommie.

The first worry comes from the great praise which he received at the time, and

which he is still receiving, for his gameness in playing the last match of his life with a foot so bad that in little over an hour after the final shot he was under a surgeon's knife. It also comes from the great sympathy which he got at the time, and which he is still receiving, for having the most brilliant of all tennis careers terminated at its very height by the accident of stepping upon a bit of broken glass. This praise and sympathy make Jerry writhe. He feels he deserves neither. He was not game. All that happened, he brought upon himself.

His second great worry concerns Tommie alone.

One afternoon, to help groom Tommie for the Davis Cup matches which were to begin in a few days in the big new Stadium, Jerry was on one of the old grandstand courts of the West Side Club just in front of the clubhouse, and he was shooting over his assortment of ground-strokes to the champion of the world. Jerry stood near his baseline, as during almost four sets of his match with

Allerton, and his strokes were as accurate, as varied, as cunning, as on that famous afternoon. But the little champion got everything. He plucked them out of the air, dug them out of the grass near the net, picked them, however sharply angled, off the sidelines, shot them back from the far corners: yes, Tommie got everything, and almost everything he got above the level of his waist he killed. And he did it all in a singularly effortless way: in that respect, at least, his minimum expenditure of energy, Tommie's game had always been very like Jerry's. It was marvelous playing — marvelous! And he was a wonderful champion, Tommie — wonderful! He deserved to be the great idol that he was.

As the two came up the steps, their practice over, Garry Weston and Uncle Billy, who had been watching the proceedings from the porch, both made a rush at Tommie. But Uncle Billy had a pace or two of lead, and his was the bear-hug that enfolded the champion.

'Great work, Tommie! — great work!' his big voice boomed out exultantly. 'The world can't match you! As long as America has you, American tennis is safe! And with a game like yours, you'll be at your best for a dozen more years!'

Tommie grinned, thanked him, thanked Garry Weston for similar exultant praise, received compliments from other spectators, and after a few minutes was up in the locker-room with Jerry. The afternoon was still young; the other players were still upon the courts; so they had the big locker-room practically to themselves. Tommie drew Jerry into the privacy of an aisle at the end of the room, and then turned upon his friend. The manner of the little champion was tense, suppressed.

'Jerry, you heard what Uncle Billy said as we came in?' he whispered. 'About American tennis being safe so long as America had me? And my being good for another dozen years?'

'Yes, Tommie.'

'Remember what you said to me once in our hotel room, long ago,' continued his desperately earnest whisper — 'about what it takes out of a man's life to keep on being champion if he'd like to be something else besides? — about being caught in a cage of glory? You remember what you said?'

'Yes, I remember, Tommie.'

'I only partly understood then. But I understand it all now! And it's all true! And — and — tell me, Jerry — tell me —'

'Go ahead,' prompted Jerry, wondering.

The champion clutched Jerry's bare arm in a fierce grip.

'Tell me this, Jerry,' he huskily demanded in his fierce intensity — '*how am I going to get out?*'

That is what worries Jerry about Tommie. Jerry did not answer him then, and has not answered him since. For Jerry does not know the answer.

THE END

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 08776 342 9

THE TRAIL of GLORY

BY

LEROY SCOTT

'The greatest sport novel I have ever read.'

Wm. T. TILDEN, 2nd